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FAMOUS SPEECHES

FAMOUS SPEECHES

(First Series)

Selected and Edited with Introductory Notes by HERBERT PAUL

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SELECTED AND EDITED,
WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTES

BY

HERBERT PAUL
Author of "The Life of Froude," etc.

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(SECOND SERIES)

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE proprietors of the *Times* have kindly given permission for the reproduction of Lord Salisbury's speech at Newport. I am indebted to Messrs. Macmillan for leave to reprint Mr. Lowell's address on Democracy; to Messrs. Longman for Disraeli's Budget speech, and Lord Randolph Churchill's speech at Dartford; to the Cobden Club for Lord Rosebery's address at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester, and to Lord Morley for his speech on John Bright. In eight of the other speeches the text of Hansard has been followed.

INTRODUCTION

PARLIAMENTARY Government in England has always been accompanied by the continuous discussion of political subjects both at Westminster and elsewhere. The very fact that three distinct and separate Legislatures became by degrees the Parliament of the United Kingdom has brought into prominence the combination of local with general interests which forms the staple of our political controversies. That, however, by no means exhausts the range of questions with which these pages deal. Foreign policy has played a considerable part in the history of British development. Although Ministers are in the first instance responsible for the conduct of foreign affairs, the fact that they must render an account to the House of Commons, and in the last resort to the country, brings every part of our relations with other Powers within the scope and range of political debate. The gradual and enormous growth of the British Empire has added another set of topics, vast, varied, and yet mutually connected, to the list with which politicians are concerned. It sometimes seems to be forgotten that Parliament theoretically possesses the right of legislating for the whole of the King's dominions. The practical exercise of such a right is only possible under conditions which make it little more than nominal. But it survives in the form of making the affairs of the Empire matter of public and Parliamentary interest as no purely foreign questions could be. Thus the extent of our politics has constantly widened, and Parliament, which is the centre of political action, has enlarged the scope of its interests far beyond the range of its actual authority. It is interesting to observe how this process has developed through almost imperceptible steps from the beginnings of Parliament to the present time. The several stages of enlargement can scarcely be distinguished. What plainly

appears is that the process has been continuous, and that no limit can be fixed at which it must come to an end.

There is a contrast, as well as a resemblance, between good speeches of different kinds. For example, some illustrate chiefly the glory of words, the power of language to express and embroider thought. This class of oratory does not concern itself directly with persuasion or conviction. Its object is artistic, rather then practical. The orator and his audience exercise a mutual influence. For one is as necessary as the other to the success of the effort. The speaker, moreover, has the advantage of being able to test the progress of his endeavours, and to watch their result as he continues. He must feel the pulse of his audience and, as he proceeds, he must respond to the signs which he observes in them. It is part of the difficulty belonging to the choice of speeches for publication that they are not primarily meant to be read. There are, however, exceptions to this rule. The House of Commons did not listen to Burke. He often addressed empty benches, and yet he is now reckoned as among the greatest orators of all time. Macaulay's speeches are still read as models of pungent and powerful rhetoric. Although he certainly did not lack eager and attentive listeners, as well opponents as friends, his speeches were criticised as smelling of the lamp. Yet two of them are known to have changed votes. Both these distinguished men did undoubtedly think of the future, even when they spoke upon the immediate topics of the day. A speech which affects policy is an interesting historical event. A speech which can always be read with pleasure is a literary masterpiece. To impose this double qualification in all cases is impracticable. It would shut out more than half the most famous speeches of the world. Those which comply with either test are worthy to be kept in remembrance as illustrations of what the human voice can achieve in moulding the thoughts of the race, and shaping the destinies of mankind.

Although very few speeches produce an immediate result, it is a fallacy to assume that the others have no result at all. Persuasion is a gradual process, and it is through long controversy that general conclusions are reached. The power of touching the emotions may be the supreme test of eloquence. But that is the kind of eloquence which must be heard, because it cannot be transmitted by any report. The oratory which survives the speaker, and can be appreciated for its arguments, or its phrases, is the only class that can be embodied in a collection like this. The speeches chosen should be such as show the best and the most numerous points of contact between ideas and words. How do public speakers exercise an influence upon public affairs? That is the real question which a volume of speeches ought to answer. Different as the orators are, and various as are the topics with which they deal, the speeches all help to explain the relation between the mental inference and the spoken word. A great deal must depend, not only upon the man, but also upon the time and circumstance. There are occasions when energy and enthusiasm, clothed in picturesque language, carry everything before them. There are others when convincing argument, expressed with cogent lucidity, may be the turning point of a controversy, or a debate. Then, again, there are addresses which succeed in planting upon the minds of the audience a new and permanent conception of a hackneyed or familiar truth. Thus adaptability is an important characteristic of the speaking which really tells. Not that every speaker is adapted to every opportunity. The late Duke of Devonshire, for instance, never inspired, or attempted to inspire, enthusiasm. He was only effective when straightforward reasoning, expressed with plain and simple vigour, appealed to the audience of the time. Disraeli, on the other hand, had the gift of bringing ridicule to bear upon controversy, and of strengthening his own case by a caricature of the views put forward on the other side. Gladstone excelled in the

difficult art of combining general and comprehensive views with specific defence of his own proposals wherever they were criticised or attacked. It was in this fusion of the general with the particular, this union of large principles with precise and accurate details, that his power chiefly consisted.

That speaking has for some time tended to become more practical few would dispute. But there may be quite as much art in practical speaking as in any other. An argument may be put in an almost infinite variety of ways, and yet there must always be a way which is best suited to a particular audience at a given time and place. Now that the habit of public speaking is more widely diffused than it ever was before, it is natural that variety of methods should also multiply. Comparison will show how different are the modes of explanation and illustration, of attack and defence, to which modern orators have recourse. One thing, however, is clearly discernible in most modern speeches, and that is what may be called their comparative concentration. Speaking is far less discursive than it was in times of ampler leisure and fewer subjects of dispute. Facts and reasons play a much larger part than rhetoric and eloquence in modern addresses, whatever the general purport of the remarks may be. So much depends upon the temperament of the individual speaker that it is impossible to describe the character of modern oratory in a phrase or a formula. One may observe, however, that the mental habit of assuming agreement rather than opposition, of stimulating friends rather than answering opponents, has become familiar to the contemporary politician.

Types of speaking have tended to vary more and more with the large number and different characters of the men who adopt it as part of their business in life. With this multitude and variety there naturally goes a much more numerous assemblage of styles and arrangements in rhetorical art. Nor are they confined in these days to politics. Speeches are frequently made on subjects of social and general interest which were

formerly treated only in writing. It is more essentially true than before that the speaker makes his own system, bends it to his needs, and adapts it as it could not have been adapted when all speeches were of much the same kind. Under these new conditions the form is less than the substance, and speeches are shaped by the subject, hardly less than by the speakers themselves. There is now far less formality than there used to be, and therefore more spontaneity, more personality, less effort, a more natural note.

Inasmuch, however, as the argumentative side of speaking cannot be neglected, there is a tendency in modern oratory to answer imaginary objections, put as examples by the orator himself, and thus to carry on controversy by means of artificial debates. The speaker is, of course, apt in such cases to give himself the victory. But, on the other hand, he is encouraged to study the whole subject, and to deal in earnest with points which he might otherwise be tempted to omit. This form of rhetorical reasoning, or persuasive logic, seems to carry most weight with popular audiences at the present day. It is quite possible to observe how the influence of logical speaking grows, and how the type of eloquence which contains a mixture of logical persuasion becomes more usual than simple appeal to the feelings or instincts of class or party, though, of course, general statements about speaking are necessarily modified by particulars of time, place, person or circumstance.

Lord Morley and Lord Rosebery have been included in the list of speakers whose eloquence is illustrated in this volume, as they furnish excellent and appropriate specimens of modern and contemporary rhetoric. They have both dealt with abundance of topics, and the choice of examples was not easy. The two addresses chosen bring out clearly and conspicuously the distinctive characteristics of their styles. They complete a collection which might well have been extended, but which as it stands comprises a sufficient number of instances to be

fairly representative of English oratory during the last few decades. It will be seen that while the subject and scope of public speaking have greatly widened, they have developed in a manner not incompatible with the precedents and traditions of the past.

FAMOUS SPEECHES

LORD MACAULAY

MACAULAY'S first speech on Indian affairs was considered by some good judges to be the best speech he ever made. It is certainly one of the most vivid and picturesque, extremely characteristic in the wealth of its imagery, the force of its rhetoric, and the thorough grasp of a complicated subject in all its bearings. The occasion was the renewal of the East India Company's Charter in 1833, when their monopoly was extinguished, and they ceased to trade on their own account, becoming merely administrators under the control of the Crown. Macaulay was then Secretary to the Board of Control in the Government of Lord Grey. The Bill in support of which this speech was made authorised the admission of Indians to office, and introduced a limited form of competition for the Civil Service of India.

THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

House of Commons, July 10, 1833

HAVING, while this bill was in preparation, enjoyed the fullest and kindest confidence of my right honourable friend the President of the Board of Control, agreeing with him completely in all those views which on a former occasion, he so luminously and eloquently developed, having shared his anxieties, and feeling that in some degree I share his responsibility, I am naturally anxious to obtain the attention of the House while I attempt to defend the principles of the proposed arrangement. I wish that I could promise to be very brief; but the subject is so extensive that I will only promise to condense what I have to say as much as I can.

I rejoice, Sir, that I am completely dispensed, by the turn which our debates have taken, from the necessity of saying anything in favour of one part of our plan, the opening of the

China trade. No voice, I believe, has yet been raised here in support of the monopoly. On that subject all public men of all parties seem to be agreed. The resolution proposed by the Ministers has received the unanimous assent of both Houses, and the approbation of the whole kingdom. I will not, therefore, Sir, detain you by vindicating what no gentleman has yet ventured to attack, but will proceed to call your attention to those effects which this great commercial revolution necessarily produced on the system of Indian government and finance.

The China trade is to be opened. Reason requires this. Public opinion requires it. The Government of the Duke of Wellington felt the necessity as strongly as the Government of Lord Grey. No Minister, Whig or Tory, could have been found to propose a renewal of the monopoly. No parliament, reformed or unreformed, would have listened to such a proposition. But though the opening of the trade was a matter concerning which the public had long made up its mind, the political consequences which must necessarily follow from the opening of the trade seem to me to be even now little understood. The language which I have heard in almost every circle when the subject was discussed was this: "Take away the monopoly, and leave the Government of India to the Company"; a very short and convenient way of settling one of the most complicated questions that ever a legislature had to consider. The honourable member for Sheffield (Mr. Buckingham) though not disposed to retain the Company as an organ of government, has repeatedly used language which proves that he shares in the general misconception. The fact is that the abolition of the monopoly rendered it absolutely necessary to make a fundamental change in the constitution of that great corporation.

The Company had united in itself two characters, the character of trader and the character of Sovereign. Between the trader and the Sovereign there was a long and complicated account, almost every item of which furnished matter for litigation. While the monopoly continued, indeed, litigation was averted. The effect of the monopoly was, to satisfy the claims both of commerce and of territory, at the expense of a third party, the English people; to secure at once funds for the dividend of the stockholder and funds for the government

of the Indian Empire, by means of a heavy tax on the tea consumed in this country. But, when the third party would no longer bear this charge, all the great financial questions which had, at the cost of that third party, been kept in abeyance, were opened in an instant. The connection between the Company in its mercantile capacity, and the same company in its political capacity, was dissolved. Even if the Company were permitted, as has been suggested, to govern India and at the same time to trade with China, no advances would be made from the profits of its Chinese trade for the support of its Indian government. It was in consideration of the exclusive privilege that the Company had hitherto been required to make those advances; it was by the exclusive privilege that the Company had been enabled to make them. When that privilege was taken away, it would be unreasonable in the Legislature to impose such an obligation, and impossible for the Company to fulfil it. The whole system of loans from commerce to territory, and repayments from territory to commerce, must cease. Each party must rest altogether on its own resources. It was therefore absolutely necessary to ascertain what resources each party possessed, to bring the long and intricate account between them to a close, and to assign to each a fair portion of debts and liabilities. There was vast property. How much of that property was applicable to purposes of state? How much was applicable to a dividend? There were debts to the amount of many millions. Which of these were the debts of the government that ruled at Calcutta? Which of the great mercantile house that bought tea at Canton? Were the creditors to look to the land revenues of India for their money? Or were they entitled to put executions into the warehouses behind Bishopsgate Street?

There were two ways of settling these questions; adjudication and compromise. The difficulties of adjudication were great; I think insuperable. Whatever acuteness and diligence could do has been done. One person in particular, whose talents and industry peculiarly fitted him for such investigations, and of whom I can never think without regret, Mr. Hyde Villiers, devoted himself to the examination with an ardour and a perseverance which, I believe, shortened a life most valuable to his country and his friends. The assistance of the most skilful accountants has been called in. But the

difficulties are such as no accountant, however skilful, could possibly remove. The difficulties are not arithmetical, but political. They arise from the Constitution of the Company, from the long and intimate union of the commercial and imperial charters in one body. Suppose that the treasurer of a charity were to mix up the money which he receives on account of the charity with his own private rents and dividends, to pay the whole into his bank to his own private account, to draw it out again by cheques in exactly the same form when he wanted it for the purpose of his public trust. Suppose that he were to continue to act thus till he was himself ignorant whether he were in advance or arrear; and suppose that many years after his death a question were to arise whether his estate were in debt to the charity or the charity to his estate. Such is the question which is now before us, with this important difference; that the accounts of an individual could not be in such a state unless he had been guilty of fraud, and that the accounts of the Company were brought into this state by circumstances unparalleled in the history of the world.

It is a mistake to suppose that the Company was a merely commercial body till the middle of the last century. Commerce was its chief object; but in order to enable it to pursue that object, it had been, like the other Companies which were its rivals, like the Dutch India Company, like the French India Company, invested from a very early period with political functions. More than 120 years ago, the Company was in miniature precisely what it now is. It was entrusted with the very highest prerogatives of sovereignty. It had its forts, and its white captains, and its black sepoys; it had its civil and criminal tribunals; it was authorised to proclaim martial law; it sent ambassadors to the native governments and concluded treaties with them; it was Zemindar of several districts, and within those districts, like other Zemindars of the first class, it exercised the powers of a sovereign, even to the infliction of capital punishment on the Hindoos within its jurisdiction. It is incorrect, therefore, to say, that the Company was at first a mere trader, and has since become a sovereign. It was at first a great trader and a petty prince. The political functions at first attracted little notice, because they were merely auxiliary to the commercial functions. By degrees, however, the political functions became more and more

important. The Zemindar became a great nabob, became Sovereign of all India; the 200 sepoys became 200,000. This change was gradually wrought, and was not immediately comprehended. It was natural that, while the political functions of the Company were merely auxiliary to its commerce, the political accounts should have been mixed up with the commercial accounts. It was equally natural that this mode of keeping accounts, having once been established, should have remained unaltered; and the more so, as the change in the situation of the Company, though rapid, was not sudden. It is impossible to name any one day, or any one year, as the day or the year when the Company became a great potentate. It has been the fashion indeed to fix on the year 1765, the year in which the Mogul issued a commission authorising the Company to administer the revenues of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, as the precise date of the accession of this singular body to Sovereignty. I am utterly at a loss to understand why this epoch should be selected. Long before 1765, the Company had the reality of political power. Long before that year, they made a nabob of Arcot; they made and unmade nabobs of Bengal; they humbled the Vizier of Oude; they braved the Emperor of Hindustan himself; more than half the revenues of Bengal were under one pretence or another administered by them. And after the grant, the Company was not, in form and name, an independent power. It was merely a minister of the Court of Delhi. Its coinage bore the name of Shah Alum. The inscription which, down to the time of the Marquis of Hastings, appeared on the seal of the Governor-General, declared that great functionary to be the slave of the Mogul. Even to this day we have never formally deposed the King of Delhi. The Company contents itself with being Mayor of the Palace, while the *Roi Fainéant* is suffered to play at being a Sovereign. In fact, it was considered, both by Lord Clive and by Warren Hastings, as a point of policy to leave the character of the Company thus undefined, in order that the English might treat the princes in whose names they governed as realities or nonentities, just as might be most convenient.

Thus the transformation of the Company from a trading body, which possessed some Sovereign prerogatives for the purpose of trade, into a Sovereign body, the trade of which

was auxiliary to its Sovereignty, was effected by degrees and under disguise. It is not strange, therefore, that the mercantile and political transactions of this great corporation should be entangled together in inextricable complication. The commercial investments have been purchased out of the revenues of the empire. The expenses of war and government have been defrayed out of the profits of the trade. Commerce and territory have contributed to the improvement of the same spot of land, to the repairs of the same building. Securities have been given in precisely the same form, for money which has been borrowed for purposes of State, and for money which has been borrowed for purposes of traffic. It is easy, indeed,—and this is a circumstance which has, I think, misled some gentlemen,—it is easy to see what part of the assets of the Company appears in a commercial form, and what appears in a political or territorial form. But this is not the question. Assets which are commercial in form may be territorial as respects the right of property; assets which are territorial in form may be commercial as respects the right of property. A chest of tea is not necessarily commercial property; it may have been bought out of the territorial revenue. A fort is not necessarily territorial property; it may stand on ground which the Company bought a hundred years ago out of their commercial profits. Adjudication, if by adjudication be meant decision according to some known rule of law, was out of the question. To leave matters like these to be determined by the ordinary maxims of our civil jurisprudence would have been the height of absurdity and injustice. For example, the home bond debt of the Company, it is believed, was incurred partly for political and partly for commercial purposes. But there is no evidence which would enable us to assign to each branch its proper share. The bonds all run in the same form; and a court of justice would, therefore, of course, either lay the whole burthen on the proprietors, or lay the whole on the territory. We have legal opinions, very respectable legal opinions, to the effect, that in strictness of law the territory is not responsible, and that the commercial assets are responsible for every farthing of the debts which were incurred for the government and the defence of India. But though this may be, and I believe is, law, it is, I am sure, neither reason nor justice. On the other hand, it is urged

by the advocates of the Company, that some valuable portions of the territory are the property of that body in its commercial capacity; that Calcutta, for example, is the private estate of the Company; that the Company holds the island of Bombay, in free and common socage, as of the Manor of East Greenwich. I will not pronounce any opinion on these points. I have considered them enough to see that there is quite difficulty enough in them to exercise all the ingenuity of all the lawyers in the kingdom for twenty years. But the fact is, Sir, that the municipal law was not made for controversies of this description. The existence of such a body as this gigantic corporation, this political monster of two natures, subject in one hemisphere, Sovereign in another, had never been contemplated by the legislators or judges of former ages. Nothing but grotesque absurdity and atrocious injustice could have been the effect, if the claims and liabilities of such a body had been settled according to the rules of Westminster Hall, if the maxims of conveyancers had been applied to the titles by which flourishing cities and provinces are held, or the maxims of the law merchant to those promissory notes which are the securities for a great National Debt, raised for the purpose of exterminating the Pindarrees and humbling the Burmese.

It was, as I have said, absolutely impossible to bring the question between commerce and territory to a satisfactory adjudication; and I must add that, even if the difficulties which I have mentioned could have been surmounted, even if there had been reason to hope that a satisfactory adjudication could have been obtained, I should still have wished to avoid that course. I think it desirable that the Company should continue to have a share in the government of India; and it would evidently have been impossible, pending a litigation between commerce and territory, to leave any political power to the Company. It would clearly have been the duty of those who were charged with the superintendence of India to be the patrons of India throughout that momentous litigation, to scrutinise with the utmost severity every claim which might be made on the Indian revenues, and to oppose, with energy and perseverance, every such claim, unless its justice were manifest. If the Company was to be engaged in a suit for many millions, in a suit which might last for many years, against the Indian territory, could we entrust the Company with the

government of that territory? Could we put the plaintiff in the situation of the *prochain ami* of the defendant? Could we appoint governors who would have had an interest opposed in the most direct manner to the interest of the governed, whose stock would have been raised in value by every decision which added to the burthens of their subjects, and depressed by every decision which diminished those burthens? It would be absurd to suppose that they would efficiently defend our Indian Empire against the claims which they themselves were bringing against it; and it would be equally absurd to give the government of the Indian Empire to those who could not be trusted to defend its interests.

Seeing, then, that it was most difficult, if not wholly impossible, to resort to adjudication between commerce and territory, seeing that, if recourse were had to adjudication, it would be necessary to make a complete revolution in the whole constitution of India, the Government has proposed a compromise. That compromise, with some modifications which did not in the least degree affect its principle, and which, while they gave satisfaction to the Company, will eventually lay no additional burthen on the territory, has been accepted. It has, like all other compromises, been loudly censured by violent partisans on both sides. It has been represented by some as far too favourable to the Company, and by others as most unjust to the Company. Sir, I own that we cannot prove that either of these accusations is unfounded. It is of the very essence of our case that we should not be able to show that we have assigned, either to commerce or to territory, its precise due. For our principal reason for recommending a compromise was a full conviction that it was absolutely impossible to ascertain with precision what was due to commerce and what was due to territory. It is not strange that some people should accuse us of robbing the Company, and others of conferring a vast boon on the Company at the expense of India: for we have proposed a middle course, on the very ground that there was a chance of a result much more favourable to the Company than our arrangement, and a chance also of a result much less favourable. If the questions pending between the Company and India had been decided as the ardent supporters of the Company predicted, India would, if I calculate rightly, have paid £11,000,000 more than she will

now have to pay. If those questions had been decided as some violent enemies of the Company predicted, that great body would have been utterly ruined. The very meaning of compromise is that each party gives up his chance of complete success, in order to be secured against the chance of utter failure. And, as men of sanguine mind always overrate the chances in their own favour, every fair compromise is sure to be severely censured on both sides. I conceive that, in a case so dark and complicated as this, the compromise which we recommend is sufficiently vindicated, if it cannot be proved to be unfair. We are not bound to prove it to be fair. For it would have been unnecessary for us to resort to compromise at all, if we had been in possession of evidence which would have enabled us to pronounce, with certainty, what claims were fair and what were unfair. It seems to me that we have acted with due consideration for every party. The dividend which we give to the proprietors is precisely the same dividend which they have been receiving during forty years, and which they have expected to receive permanently. The price of their stock bears at present the same proportion to the price of other stock which it bore four or five years ago, before the anxiety and excitement which late negotiations naturally produced had begun to operate. As to the territory on the other hand, it is true that, if the assets which are now in a commercial form should not produce a fund sufficient to pay the debts and dividend of the Company, the territory must stand to the loss and pay the difference. But in return for taking this risk, the territory obtains an immediate release from claims to the amount of many millions. I certainly do not believe that all those claims could have been substantiated; but I know that very able men think differently. And, if only one-fourth of the sum demanded had been awarded to the Company, India would have lost more than the largest sum which, as it seems to me, she can possibly lose under the proposed arrangement.

In a pecuniary point of view, therefore, I conceive that we can defend the measure as it affects the territory. But to the territory the pecuniary question is of secondary importance. If we have made a good pecuniary bargain for India, but a bad political bargain, if we have saved three or four millions to the finances of that country, and given it, at the

same time, pernicious institutions, we shall indeed have been practising a most ruinous parsimony. If, on the other hand, it shall be found that we have added fifty or a hundred thousand pounds a year to the expenditure of an empire which yields a revenue of twenty millions, but that we have at the same time secured to that empire, as far as in us lies, the blessings of good government, we shall have no reason to be ashamed of our profusion. I hope and believe that India will have to pay nothing. But, on the most unfavourable supposition that can be made, she will not have to pay so much to the Company as she now pays annually to a single state pageant, to the titular Nabob of Bengal, for example, or the titular King of Delhi. What she pays to these nominal princes, who, while they did anything, did mischief, who now do nothing, she may well consent to pay to her real rulers, if she receives from them, in return, efficient protection and good legislation.

We come then to the great question. Is it desirable to retain the Company as an organ of government for India? I think that it is desirable. The question is, I acknowledge, beset with difficulties. We have to solve one of the hardest problems in politics. We are trying to make bricks without straw, to bring a clean thing out of an unclean, to give a good government to people to whom we cannot give a free government. In this country, in any neighbouring country, it is easy to frame securities against oppression. In Europe, you have the materials of good government everywhere ready to your hands. The people are everywhere perfectly competent to hold some share, not in every country an equal share, but some share, of political power. If the question were, What is the best mode of securing good government in Europe? the merest smatterer in politics would answer, representative institutions. In India you cannot have representative institutions. Of all the innumerable speculators who have offered their suggestions on Indian politics, not a single one, as far as I know, however democratical his opinions may be, has ever maintained the possibility of giving at the present time such institutions to India. One gentleman, extremely well acquainted with the affairs of our Eastern Empire, a most valuable servant of the Company, and the author of a History of India, which, though certainly not free from faults, is, I

think, on the whole, the greatest historical work that has appeared in our language since Gibbon, I mean Mr. Mill, was examined on this point. That gentleman is well known to be a very bold and uncompromising politician. He has written, strongly, far too strongly I think, in favour of pure democracy. He has gone so far as to maintain that no nation which has not a representative legislature, chosen by universal suffrage, enjoys security against oppression. But when he was asked, before the Committee of last year, whether he thought representative government practicable in India, his answer was, "Utterly out of the question." This, then, is the state in which we are. We have to frame a good government for a country into which, by universal acknowledgment, we cannot introduce those institutions which all our habits, which all the reasonings of European philosophers, which all the history of our own part of the world, would lead us to consider as the one great security for good government. We have to engraft on despotism those blessings which are the natural fruits of liberty. In these circumstances, Sir, it behoves us to be cautious, even to the verge of timidity. The lights of political science and of history are withdrawn: we are walking in darkness: we do not distinctly see whither we are going. It is the wisdom of a man so situated to feel his way, and not to plant his foot till he is well assured that the ground before him is firm.

Some things, however, in the midst of this obscurity, I can see with clearness. I can see, for example, that it is desirable that the authority exercised in this country over the Indian Government should be divided between two bodies, between a minister or a board appointed by the Crown, and some other body independent of the Crown. If India is to be a dependency of England, to be at war with our enemies, to be at peace with our allies, to be protected by the English navy from maritime aggression, to have a portion of the English army mixed with its sepoys, it plainly follows that the King, to whom the Constitution gives the direction of foreign affairs, and the command of the military and naval forces, ought to have a share in the direction of the Indian Government. Yet, on the other hand, that a revenue of £20,000,000 a year, an army of 200,000 men, a civil service abounding with lucrative situations, should be left to the disposal of the Crown without any check

whatever, is what no Minister, I conceive, would venture to propose. This House is, indeed, the check provided by the Constitution on the abuse of the royal prerogative. But that this House is, or is ever likely to be, an efficient check on abuses practised in India, I altogether deny. We have, as I believe we all feel, quite business enough. If we were to undertake the task of looking into Indian affairs as we look into British affairs, if we were to have Indian budgets and Indian estimates, if we were to go into the Indian currency question and the Indian Bank Charter, if to our disputes about Belgium and Holland, Don Pedro and Don Miguel, were to be added disputes about the debts of the Guicowar, and the disorders of Mysore, the ex-king of the Afghans and the Maharajah Runjeet Singh; if we were to have one night occupied by the embezzlements of the Benares Mint, and another by the panic in the Calcutta money market; if the questions of Suttee or no Suttee, Pilgrim tax or no Pilgrim tax, Ryotwary or Zemindary, half Batta or whole Batta, were to be debated at the same length at which we have debated Church reform and the assessed taxes, twenty-four hours a day and three hundred and sixty-five days a year would be too short a time for the discharge of our duties. The House, it is plain, has not the necessary time to settle these matters; nor has it the necessary knowledge; nor has it the motives to acquire that knowledge. The late change in its constitution has made it, I believe, a much more faithful representative of the English people. But it is as far as ever from being a representative of the Indian people. A broken head in Cold Bath Fields produces a greater sensation among us than three pitched battles in India. A few weeks ago we had to decide on a claim brought by an individual against the revenues of India. If it had been an English question, the walls would scarcely have held the members who would have flocked to the division. It was an Indian question; and we could scarcely, by dint of supplication, make a House. Even when my right honourable friend the President of the Board of Control gave his able and interesting explanation of the plan which he intended to propose for the government of 100,000,000 of human beings, the attendance was not so large as I have often seen it on a turnpike bill or a railroad bill.

I then take these things as proved, that the Crown must

have a certain authority over India, that there must be an efficient check on the authority of the Crown, and that the House of Commons cannot be that efficient check. We must then find some other body to perform that important office. We have such a body, the Company. Shall we discard it?

It is true that the power of the Company is an anomaly in politics. It is strange, very strange, that a joint-stock society of traders, a society the shares of which are daily passed from hand to hand, a society the component parts of which are perpetually changing, a society, which, judging *à priori* from its constitution, we should have said was as little fitted for imperial functions as the Merchant Taylors' Company or the New River Company, should be intrusted with the Sovereignty of a larger population, the disposal of a larger clear revenue, the command of a larger army, than are under the direct management of the Executive Government of the United Kingdom. But what constitution can we give to our Indian Empire which shall not be strange, which shall not be anomalous? That Empire is itself the strangest of all political anomalies. That a handful of adventurers from an island in the Atlantic should have subjugated a vast country divided from the place of their birth by half the globe; a country which, at no very distant period, was merely the subject of fable to the nations of Europe; a country never before violated by the most renowned of Western Conquerors; a country which Trajan never entered; a country lying beyond the point where the phalanx of Alexander refused to proceed; that we should govern a territory 10,000 miles from us, a territory larger and more populous than France, Spain, Italy, and Germany put together, a territory the present clear revenue of which exceeds the present clear revenue of any State in the world, France excepted; a territory, inhabited by men differing from us in race, colour, language, manners, morals, religion; these are prodigies to which the world has seen nothing similar. Reason is confounded. We interrogate the past in vain. General rules are useless where the whole is one vast exception. The Company is an anomaly; but it is part of a system where everything is anomaly. It is the strangest of all governments; but it is designed for the strangest of all Empires.

If we discard the Company, we must find a substitute:

and, take what substitute we may, we shall find ourselves unable to give any reason for believing that the body which we have put in the room of the Company is likely to acquit itself of its duties better than the Company. Commissioners appointed by the King during pleasure would be no check on the Crown; Commissioners appointed by the King or by Parliament for life would always be appointed by the political party which might be uppermost, and if a change of administration took place, would harass the new Government with the most vexatious opposition. The plan suggested by the right honourable gentleman the member for Montgomeryshire (Mr. Charles Wynne), is I think, the very worst that I ever heard. He would have directors nominated every four years by the Crown. Is it not plain that these Directors would always be appointed from among the supporters of the Ministry for the time being; that their situations would depend on the permanence of that Ministry, and, in case of a change, for the purpose of molesting those who might succeed to power; that they would be subservient while their friends were in, and factious when their friends were out? How would Lord Grey's Ministry have been situated if the whole body of Directors had been nominated by the Duke of Wellington in 1830? I mean no imputation on the Duke of Wellington. If the present Ministers had to nominate Directors for four years, they would, I have no doubt, nominate men who would give no small trouble to the Duke of Wellington if he were to return to office. What we want is a body independent of the Government, and no more than independent, not a tool of the Treasury, not a tool of the Opposition. No new plan which I have heard proposed would give us such a body. The Company, strange as its constitution may be, is such a body. It is, as a corporation, neither Whig nor Tory, neither high-church nor low-church. It cannot be charged with having been for or against the Catholic Bill, for or against the Reform Bill. It has constantly acted with a view, not to English politics, but to Indian politics. We have seen the country convulsed by faction. We have seen Ministers driven from office by this House, Parliament dissolved in anger, general elections of unprecedented turbulence, debates of unprecedented interest. We have seen the two branches of the Legislature placed in direct opposition to each other. We have seen the advisers of the Crown dismissed one day,

and brought back the next day on the shoulders of the people. And amidst all these agitating events the Company has preserved strict and unsuspected neutrality. This is, I think, an inestimable advantage; and it is an advantage which we must altogether forego, if we consent to adopt any of the schemes which I have heard proposed on the other side of the House.

We must judge of the Indian Government, as of all other governments, by its practical effects. According to the honourable member for Sheffield, India is ill-governed; and the whole fault is with the Company. Innumerable accusations, great and small, are brought by him against the Directors. They are fond of war; they are fond of dominion; the taxation is burdensome; the laws are undigested; the roads are rough; the post goes on foot; and for everything the Company is answerable. From the dethronement of the Mogul princes to the mishaps of Sir Charles Metcalfe's courier, every disaster that has taken place in the East during sixty years is laid to the charge of this Corporation. And the inference is, that all the power which they possess ought to be taken out of their hands, and transferred at once to the Crown.

Now, Sir, it seems to me that for all the evil, which the honourable gentleman has so pathetically recounted, the Ministers of the Crown are as much to blame as the Company; nay, much more so; for the Board of Control could, without the consent of the Directors, have redressed those evils; and the Directors most certainly could not have redressed them without the consent of the Board of Control. Take the case of that frightful grievance which seems to have made the deepest impression on the mind of the honourable gentleman, the slowness of the mail. Why, Sir, if my right honourable friend the President of our Board thought fit, he might direct me to write to the Court and require them to frame a despatch on that subject. If the Court disobeyed, he might himself frame a despatch ordering Lord William Bentinck to put the dawks all over Bengal on horseback. If the Court refused to send out this despatch, the Board could apply to the King's Bench for a Mandamus. If, on the other hand, the Directors wished to accelerate the journeys of the mail, and the Board were adverse to the project, the Directors could do nothing at all. For all measures of internal policy the

servants of the King are at least as deeply responsible as the Company. For all measures of foreign policy, the servants of the King, and they alone, are responsible. I was surprised to hear the honourable gentleman accuse the Directors of insatiable ambition and rapacity, when he must know that no act of aggression on any native state can be committed by the Company without the sanction of the Board, and that, in fact, the Board has repeatedly approved of warlike measures, which were strenuously opposed by the Company. He must know, in particular, that, during the energetic and splendid administration of the Marquess Wellesley, the Company was all for peace, and the Board all for conquest. If a line of conduct which the honourable gentleman thinks unjustifiable has been followed by the Ministers of the Crown in spite of the remonstrance of the Directors, this is surely a strange reason for turning off the Directors, and giving the whole power unchecked to the Crown.

The honourable member tells us that India, under the present system, is not so rich and flourishing as she was two hundred years ago. Really, Sir, I doubt whether we are in possession of sufficient data to enable us to form a judgment on that point. But the matter is of little importance. We ought to compare India under our government, not with India under Akbar and his immediate successors, but with India as we found it. The calamities through which that country passed during the interval between the fall of the Mogul power and the establishment of the English supremacy were sufficient to throw the people back whole centuries. It would surely be unjust to say, that Alfred was a bad king because Britain, under his government, was not so rich or so civilised as in the time of the Romans.

In what state, then, did we find India? And what have we made India? We found society throughout that vast country in a state to which history scarcely furnishes a parallel. The nearest parallel would, perhaps, be the state of Europe during the fifth century. The Mogul empire in the time of the successors of Aurungzebe, like the Roman empire in the time of the successors of Theodosius, was sinking under the vices of a bad internal administration, and under the assaults of barbarous invaders. At Delhi, as at Ravenna, there was a mock Sovereign immured in a gorgeous state prison. He

was suffered to indulge in every sensual pleasure. He was adored with servile prostrations. He assumed and bestowed the most magnificent titles. But, in fact, he was a mere puppet in the hands of some ambitious subject. While the Honorii and Augustuli of the East, surrounded by their fawning eunuchs, revelled and dozed without knowing or caring what might pass beyond the walls of their palace gardens, the provinces had ceased to respect a government which could neither punish nor protect them. Society was a chaos. Its restless and shifting elements formed themselves every moment into some new combination which the next moment dissolved. In the course of a single generation a hundred dynasties grew up, flourished, decayed, were extinguished, were forgotten. Every adventurer who could muster a troop of horse might aspire to a throne. Every palace was every year the scene of conspiracies, treasons, resolutions, parricides. Meanwhile a rapid succession of Alarics and Attilas passed over the defenceless empire. A Persian invader penetrated to Delhi, and carried back in triumph the most precious treasures of the House of Tamerlane. The Afghan soon followed, by the same track, to glean whatever the Persian had spared. The Yauts established themselves on the Jumna. The Sikhs devastated Lahore. Every part of India, from Tanjore to the Himalayas, was laid under contribution by the Mahrattas. The people were ground down to the dust by the oppressor without and the oppressor within, by the robber from whom the Nabob was unable to protect them, by the Nabob who took whatever the robber had left to them. All the evils of despotism, and all the evils of anarchy, pressed at once on that miserable race. They knew nothing of government but its exactions. Desolation was in their imperial cities, and famine all along the banks of their broad and redundant rivers. It seemed that a few more years would suffice to efface all traces of the opulence and civilisation of an earlier age.

Such was the state of India when the Company began to take part in the disputes of its ephemeral Sovereigns. About eighty years have elapsed since we appeared as auxiliaries in a contest between two rival families for the Sovereignty of a small corner of the Peninsula. From that moment commenced a great, a stupendous process, the reconstruction of a decomposed society. Two generations have passed away; and the

process is complete. The scattered fragments of the empire of Aurungzebe have been united in an empire stronger and more closely knit than that which Aurungzebe ruled. The power of the new Sovereigns penetrates their dominions more completely, and is far more implicitly obeyed, than was that of the proudest princes of the Mogul dynasty.

It is true that the early history of this great revolution is chequered with guilt and shame. It is true that the founders of our Indian empire too often abused the strength which they derived from superior energy and superior knowledge. It is true that, with some of the highest qualities of the race from which they sprang, they combined some of the worst defects of the race over which they ruled. How should it have been otherwise? Born in humble stations, accustomed to earn a slender maintenance by obscure industry, they found themselves transformed in a few months from clerks drudging over desks, or captains in marching regiments, into statesmen and generals, with armies at their command, with the revenues of kingdoms at their disposal, with power to make and depose sovereigns at their pleasure. They were what it was natural that men should be who had been raised by so rapid an ascent to so dizzy an eminence, profuse and rapacious, imperious and corrupt.

It is true, then, that there was too much foundation for the representations of those satirists and dramatists who held up the character of the English Nabob to the derision and hatred of a former generation. It is true that some disgraceful intrigues, some unjust and cruel wars, some instances of odious perfidy and avarice stain the annals of our Eastern empire. It is true that the duties of government and legislation were long wholly neglected or carelessly performed. It is true that when the conquerors at length began to apply themselves in earnest to the discharge of their high functions they committed the errors natural to rulers who were but imperfectly acquainted with the language and manners of their subjects. It is true that some plans, which were dictated by the purest and most benevolent feelings, have not been attended by the desired success. It is true that India suffers to this day from a heavy burden of taxation and from a defective system of law. It is true, I fear, that in those states which are connected with us by subsidiary alliance, all the evils of oriental despotism

have too frequently shown themselves in their most loathsome and destructive form. . . .

All this is true. Yet in the history and in the present state of our Indian empire I see ample reason for exultation and for a good hope.

I see that we have established order where we found confusion. I see that the petty dynasties which were generated by the corruption of the great Mahometan empire, and which, a century ago, kept all India in constant agitation, have been quelled by one overwhelming power. I see that the predatory tribes which, in the middle of the last century, passed annually over the harvests of India with the destructive rapidity of a hurricane, have quailed before the valour of a braver and sterner race, have been vanquished, scattered, hunted to their strongholds, and either extirpated by the English sword, or compelled to exchange the pursuits of rapine for those of industry.

I look back for many years, and I see scarcely a trace of the vices which blemished the splendid fame of the first conquerors of Bengal. I see peace studiously preserved. I see faith inviolably maintained towards feeble and dependent states. I see confidence gradually infused into the minds of suspicious neighbours. I see the horrors of war mitigated by the chivalrous and Christian spirit of Europe. I see examples of moderation and clemency, such as I should seek in vain in the annals of any other victorious and dominant nation. I see captive tyrants, whose treachery and cruelty might have excused a severe retribution, living in security, comfort, and dignity, under the protection of the government which they laboured to destroy.

I see a large body of civil and military functionaries resembling in nothing but capacity and valour those adventurers who, seventy years ago, came hither, laden with wealth and infamy, to parade before our fathers the plundered treasures of Bengal and Tanjore. I reflect with pride that to the doubtful splendour which surrounds the memory of Hastings and of Clive, we can oppose the spotless glory of Elphinstone and Munro. I contemplate with reverence and delight the honourable poverty which is the evidence of rectitude firmly maintained amidst strong temptations. I rejoice to see my countrymen, after ruling millions of subjects, after commanding

victorious armies, after dictating terms of peace at the gates of hostile capitals, after administering the revenues of great provinces, after judging the causes of wealthy Zemindars, after residing at the Courts of tributary Kings, return to their native land with no more than a decent competence.

I see a government anxiously bent on the public good. Even in its errors I recognise a paternal feeling towards the great people committed to its charge. I see toleration strictly maintained; yet I see bloody and degrading superstitions gradually losing their power. I see the morality, the philosophy, the taste of Europe, beginning to produce a salutary effect on the hearts and understandings of our subjects. I see the public mind of India, that public mind which we found debased and contracted by the worst forms of political and religious tyranny, expanding itself to just and noble views of the ends of government and of the social duties of man.

I see evils: but I see the government actively employed in the work of remedying those evils. The taxation is heavy; but the work of retrenchment is unsparingly pursued. The mischiefs arising from the system of subsidiary alliance are great; but the rulers of India are fully aware of those mischiefs, and are engaged in guarding against them. Wherever they now interfere for the purpose of supporting a native government, they interfere also for the purpose of reforming it.

Seeing these things, then, am I prepared to discard the Company as an organ of government? I am not. Assuredly I will never shrink from innovation when I see reason to believe that innovation will be improvement. That the present government does not shrink from innovations which it considers as improvements the Bill now before the House sufficiently shows. But surely the burden of the proof lies on the innovators. They are bound to show that there is a fair probability of obtaining some advantage before they call upon us to take up the foundations of the Indian government. I have no superstitious veneration for the Court of Directors or the Court of Proprietors. Find me a better Council: find me a better constituent body: and I am ready for a change. But of all the substitutes for the Company which have hitherto been suggested, not one has been proved to be better than the Company, and most of them I could, I think, easily prove to be worse. Circumstances might force

us to hazard a change. If the Company were to refuse to accept of the government unless we would grant pecuniary terms which I thought extravagant, or unless we gave up the clauses in this Bill which permit Europeans to hold landed property and natives to hold office, I would take them at their word. But I will not discard them in the mere rage of experiment.

Do I call the government of India a perfect government? Very far from it. No nation can be perfectly well governed till it is competent to govern itself. I compare the Indian government with other governments of the same class, with despotisms, with military despotisms, and I find none that approaches it in excellence. I compare it with the government of the Roman provinces, with the government of the Spanish colonies, and I am proud of my country and my age. Here are 100,000,000 of people under the absolute rule of a few strangers, differing from them physically, differing from them morally, mere Mamelukes, not born in the country which they rule, not meaning to lay their bones in it. If you require me to make this government as good as that of England, France, or the United States of America, I own frankly that I can do no such thing. Reasoning *a priori* I should have come to the conclusion that such a government must be a horrible tyranny. It is a source of constant amazement to me that it is so good as I find it to be. I will not, therefore, in a case in which I have neither principles nor precedents to guide me, pull down the existing system on account of its theoretical defects. For I know that any system which I could put in its place would be equally condemned by theory, while it would not be equally sanctioned by experience.

Some change in the constitution of the Company was, as I have shown, rendered inevitable by the opening of the China trade; and it was the duty of the government to take care that the change should not be prejudicial to India. There were many ways in which the compromise between commerce and tyranny might be effected. We might have taken the assets, and paid a sum down, leaving the Company to invest that sum as they chose. We might have offered English security with a lower interest. We might have taken the course which the late Ministers designed to take. They would have left the Company in possession of the means of carrying on its trade in competition with private merchants.

My firm belief is that, if this course had been taken, the Company must, in a very few years, have abandoned the trade, or the trade would have ruined the Company. It was not, however, solely or principally by regard for the interest of the Company, or of English merchants generally, that the government was guided on this occasion. The course which appeared to us the most likely to promote the interests of our Eastern Empire was to make the proprietors of India stock creditors of the Indian territory. Their interest will thus be in a great measure the same with the interest of the people whom they are to rule. Their income will depend on the revenues of their empire. The revenues of their empire will depend on the manner in which the affairs of that empire are administered. We furnish them with the strongest motives to watch over the interests of the cultivator and the trader, to maintain peace, to carry on with vigour the work of retrenchment, to detect and punish extortion and corruption. Though they live at a distance from India, though few of them have ever seen, or may ever see, the people whom they rule, they will have a great stake in the happiness of their subjects. If their misgovernment should produce disorder in the finances, they will themselves feel the effects of that disorder in their own household expenses. I believe this to be, next to a representative constitution, the constitution which is the best security for good government. A representative constitution India cannot at present have. And we have, therefore, I think, given her the best constitution of which she is capable.

One word as to the new arrangement which we propose with respect to the patronage. It is intended to introduce the principle of competition in the disposal of writerships, and from this change I cannot but anticipate the happiest results. The civil servants of the Company are undoubtedly a highly respectable body of men; and in that body, as in every large body, there are some persons of very eminent ability. I rejoice most cordially to see this. I rejoice to see that the standard of morality is so high in England, that intelligence is so generally diffused through England, that young persons who are taken from the mass of society, by favour and not by merit, and who are therefore only fair samples of the mass, should, when placed in situations of high importance, be so seldom found wanting. But it is not the less true that India

is entitled to the service of the best talents which England can spare. That the average of intelligence and virtue is very high in this country is matter for honest exultation. But it is no reason for employing average men when you can obtain superior men.

Consider, too, Sir, how rapidly the public mind of India is advancing, how much attention is already paid by the higher classes of the natives to those intellectual pursuits on the culture of which the superiority of the European race to the rest of mankind principally depends. Surely, in such circumstances, from motives of selfish policy, if from no higher motive, we ought to fill the magistracies of our Eastern Empire with men who may do honour to their country, with men who may represent the best part of the English nation. This, Sir, is our object; and we believe that by the plan which is now proposed this object will be attained. It is proposed that for every vacancy in the civil service four candidates shall be named, and the best candidate selected by examination. We conceive that, under this system, the persons sent out will be young men above par, young men superior, either in talents or in diligence, to the mass. It is said, I know, that examinations in Latin, in Greek, and in mathematics, are no test of what men will prove to be in life. I am perfectly aware that they are not infallible tests: but that they are tests I confidently maintain. Look at every walk of life, at this House, at the other House, at the Bar, at the Bench, at the Church, and see whether it be not true that those who attain high distinction in the world were generally men who were distinguished in their academic career. Indeed, Sir, this objection would prove far too much even for those who use it. It would prove that there is no use at all in education. Why should we put boys out of their way? Why should we force a lad, who would much rather fly a kite or trundle a hoop, to learn his Latin Grammar? Why should we keep a young man to his Thucydides or his Laplace, when he would much rather be shooting? Education would be mere useless torture, if, at two or three and twenty, a man who had neglected his studies were exactly on a par with a man who had applied himself to them, exactly as likely to perform all the offices of public life with credit to himself and with advantage to society. Whether the English system of education be good or bad is

not now the question. Perhaps I may think that too much time is given to the ancient languages and to the abstract sciences. But what then? Whatever be the languages, whatever be the sciences, which it is in any age or country the fashion to teach, the persons who become the greatest proficients in those languages and those sciences will generally be the flower of the youth, the most acute, the most industrious, the most ambitious of honourable distinctions. If the Ptolemaic system were taught at Cambridge instead of the Newtonian, the senior wrangler would nevertheless be in general a superior man to the wooden spoon. If, instead of learning Greek, we learned the Cherokee, the man who understood the Cherokee best, who made the most correct and melodious Cherokee verses, who comprehended most rapidly the effect of the Cherokee particles, would generally be a superior man to him who was destitute of these accomplishments. If astrology were taught at our Universities, the young man who cast nativities best would generally turn out a superior man. If alchemy were taught, the young man who showed most activity in the pursuit of the philosopher's stone would generally turn out a superior man.

I will only add one other observation on this subject. Although I am inclined to think that too exclusive an attention is paid in the education of young English gentlemen to the dead languages, I conceive that when you are choosing men to fill situations for which the very first and most indispensable qualification is familiarity with foreign languages, it would be difficult to find a better test of their fitness than their classical acquirements.

Some persons have expressed doubts as to the possibility of procuring fair examinations. I am quite sure that no person who has been either at Cambridge or at Oxford can entertain such doubts. I feel, indeed, that I ought to apologise for even noticing an objection so frivolous.

Next to the opening of the China trade, Sir, the change most eagerly demanded by the English people was, that the restrictions on the admission of Europeans to India should be removed. In this change there are undoubtedly very great advantages. The chief advantage is, I think, the improvement which the minds of our native subjects may be expected to derive from free intercourse with a people far advanced

beyond themselves in intellectual cultivation. I cannot deny, however, that the advantages are attended with some danger.

The danger is that the new-comers, belonging to the ruling nation, resembling in colour, in language, in manners, those who hold supreme military and political power, and differing in all these respects from the great mass of the population, may consider themselves as a superior class, and may trample on the indigenous race. Hitherto there have been strong restraints on Europeans resident in India. Licences were not easily obtained. Those residents who were in the service of the Company had obvious motives for conducting themselves with propriety. If they incurred the serious displeasure of the government, their hopes of promotion were blighted. Even those who were not in the public service were subject to the formidable power which the government possessed of banishing them at its pleasure.

The licence of the government will now no longer be necessary to persons who desire to reside in the settled provinces of India. The power of arbitrary deportation is withdrawn. Unless, therefore, we mean to leave the natives exposed to the tyranny and insolence of every profligate adventurer who may visit the East, we must place the European under the same power which legislates for the Hindoo. No man loves political freedom more than I. But a privilege enjoyed by a few individuals in the midst of a vast population who do not enjoy it, ought not to be called freedom. It is tyranny. In the West Indies I have not the least doubt that the existence of Trial by Jury and of Legislative Assemblies has tended to make the condition of the slaves worse than it would otherwise have been. Or, to go to India itself for an instance, though I fully believe that a mild penal code is better than a severe penal code, the worst of all systems was surely that of having a mild penal code for the Brahmins, who sprang from the head of the Creator, while there was a severe code for the Sudras, who sprang from His feet. India has suffered enough already from the distinction of castes, and from the deeply rooted prejudices which that distinction has engendered. God forbid that we should inflict on her the curse of a new caste, that we should send her a new breed of Brahmins, authorised to treat all the native population as Pariahs!

With a view to the prevention of this evil, we propose to

give to the supreme government the power of legislating for Europeans as well as for natives. We propose that the regulations of the government shall bind the King's Courts as they bind all other courts, and that registration by the Judges of the King's Courts shall no longer be necessary to give validity to those regulations within the towns of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay.

I could scarcely, Sir, believe my ears when I heard this part of our plan condemned in another place. I should have thought that it would have been received with peculiar favour in that quarter where it has met with the most severe condemnation. What, at present, is the case? If the supreme Court and the government differ on a question of jurisdiction, or on a question of legislation within the towns which are the seats of government, there is absolutely no umpire but the Imperial Parliament. The device of putting one wild elephant between two tame elephants was ingenious; but it may not always be practicable. Suppose a tame elephant between two wild elephants, or suppose that the whole herd should run wild together. The thing is not without example. And is it not most unjust and ridiculous that, on one side of a ditch, the edict of the Governor-General should have the force of law, and that on the other side it should be of no effect unless registered by the Judges of the Supreme Court? If the registration be not a security for good legislation, why give it to any? Is the system good? Extend it. Is it bad? Abolish it. But in the name of common-sense do not leave it as it is. It is as absurd as our old law of sanctuary. The law which authorises imprisonment for debt may be good or bad. But no man in his senses can approve of the ancient system under which a debtor who might be arrested in Fleet Street was safe as soon as he had scampered into Whitefriars. Just in the same way, doubts may fairly be entertained about the expediency of allowing four or five persons to make laws for India; but to allow them to make laws for all India without the Mahratta ditch, and to except Calcutta, is the height of absurdity.

I say, therefore, that you must enlarge the power of the Supreme Court, and give it a general veto on laws, or you must enlarge the power of the government, and make its regulations binding on all Courts without distinction. The former course

no person has ventured to propose. To the latter course objections have been made; but objections which to me, I must own, seem altogether frivolous.

It is acknowledged that of late years inconvenience has arisen from the relation in which the Supreme Court stands to the government. But, it is said, that the Court was originally instituted for the protection of natives against Europeans. The wise course would therefore be to restore its original character.

Now, Sir, the fact is, that the Supreme Court has never been so mischievous as during the first ten years of its power, or so respectable as it has lately been. Everybody who knows anything of its early history knows that, during a considerable time, it was the terror of Bengal, the scourge of the native population, the screen of European delinquents, a convenient tool of the government for all purposes of evil, an insurmountable obstacle to the government in all undertakings for the public good; that its proceedings were made up of pedantry, cruelty, and corruption; that its disputes with the government were at one time on the point of breaking up the whole fabric of society; and that a convulsion was averted only by the dexterous policy of Warren Hastings, who at last bought off the opposition of the Chief Justice for £8,000 a year. It is notorious that, while the Supreme Court opposed Hastings in all his best measures, it was a thoroughgoing accomplice in his worst; that it took part in the most scandalous of those proceedings which, fifty years ago, roused the indignation of Parliament and of the country; that it assisted in the spoliation of the princesses of Oude; that it passed sentence of death on Nuncomar. And this is the Court which we are to rescue from its present state of degeneracy to its original purity. This is the protection which we are to give to the natives against the Europeans. Sir, so far is it from being true that the character of the Supreme Court has deteriorated, that it has, perhaps, improved more than any other institution in India. But the evil lies deep in the nature of the institution itself. The judges have in our time deserved the greatest respect. Their judgment and integrity have done much to mitigate the vices of the system. The worst charge that can be brought against any of them is that of pertinacity, disinterested, conscientious pertinacity, in error. The real

evil is the state of the law. You have two supreme powers in India. There is no arbitrator except a Legislature 15,000 miles off. Such a system is on the face of it an absurdity in politics. My wonder is, not that this system has several times been on the point of producing fatal consequences to the peace and resources of India—those, I think, are the words in which Warren Hastings described the effect of the contest between his government and the judges—but that it has not actually produced such consequences. The most distinguished members of the Indian government, the most distinguished judges of the Supreme Court, call upon you to reform this system. Sir Charles Metcalfe, Sir Charles Grey, represent with equal urgency the expediency of having one single paramount council armed with legislative power. The admission of Europeans to India renders it absolutely necessary not to delay our decision. The effect of that admission would be to raise a hundred questions, to produce a hundred contests between the Council and the judicature. The government would be paralysed at the precise moment at which all its energy was required. While the two equal powers were acting in opposite directions, the whole machine of the state would stand still. The Europeans would be uncontrolled. The natives would be unprotected. The consequences I will not pretend to foresee. Everything beyond is darkness and confusion.

Having given to the government supreme legislative power, we next propose to give it for a time the assistance of a Commission for the purpose of digesting and reforming the laws of India, so that those laws may, as soon as possible, be formed into a code. Gentlemen of whom I wish to speak with the highest respect have expressed a doubt whether India be at present in a fit state to receive a benefit which is not yet enjoyed by this free and highly civilised country. Sir, I can allow to this argument very little weight beyond that which it derives from the personal authority of those who use it. For, in the first place, our freedom and our high civilisation make this improvement, desirable as it must always be, less indispensably necessary to us than to our Indian subjects; and in the next place our freedom and civilisation, I fear, make it far more difficult for us to obtain this benefit for ourselves than to bestow it on them.

I believe that no country ever stood so much in need of a code of laws as India; and I believe also that there never was a country in which the want might so easily be supplied. I said that there were many points of analogy between the state of that country after the fall of the Mogul power, and the state of Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. In one respect the analogy is very striking. As there were in Europe then, so there are in India now, several systems of law widely differing from each other, but coexisting and coequal. The indigenous population has its own laws. Each of the successive races of conquerors has brought with it its own peculiar jurisprudence: the Mussulman his Koran and the innumerable commentators on the Koran; the Englishman his Statute Book and his Term Reports. As there were established in Italy, at one and the same time, the Roman law, the Lombard law, the Ripuarian law, the Bavarian law, and the Salic law, so we have now in our Eastern empire Hindoo law, Mahometan law, Parsee law, English law, perpetually mingling with each other and disturbing each other, varying with the person, varying with the place. In one and the same cause the process and pleadings are in the fashion of one nation, the judgment is according to the laws of another. An issue is evolved according to the rules of Westminster, and decided according to those of Benares. The only Mahometan book in the nature of a code is the Koran; the only Hindoo book the Institutes. Everybody who knows those books knows that they provide for a very small part of the cases which must arise in every community. All beyond them is comment and tradition. Our regulations in civil matters do not define rights, but merely establish remedies. If a point of Hindoo law arises, the judge calls on the Pundit for an opinion. If a point of Mahometan law arises, the judge applies to the Cauzee. What the integrity of these functionaries is, we may learn from Sir William Jones. That eminent man declared that he could not answer it to his conscience to decide any point of law on the faith of a Hindoo expositor. Sir Thomas Strange confirms this declaration. Even if there were no suspicion of corruption on the part of the interpreters of the law, the science which they profess is in such a state of confusion that no reliance can be placed on their answers. Sir Francis Macnaghten tells us that it is a delusion to fancy that there is any known and fixed

law under which the Hindoo people live; that texts may be produced on any side of any question; that expositors equal in authority perpetually contradict each other; that the obsolete law is perpetually confounded with the law actually in force, and that the first lesson to be impressed on a functionary who has to administer Hindoo law is that it is vain to think of extracting certainty from the books of the jurist. The consequence is that in practice the decisions of the tribunals are altogether arbitrary. What is administered is not law, but a kind of rude and capricious equity. I asked an able and excellent judge lately returned from India how one of our Zillah Courts would decide several legal questions of great importance, questions not involving considerations of religion or of caste, mere questions of commercial law. He told me that it was a mere lottery. He knew how he should himself decide them. But he knew nothing more. I asked a most distinguished civil servant of the Company, with reference to the clause in this Bill on the subject of slavery, whether at present, if a dancing girl ran away from her master, the judge would force her to go back. "Some judges," he said, "send a girl back. Others set her at liberty. The whole is a mere matter of chance. Everything depends on the temper of the individual judge."

Even in this country we have had complaints of judge-made law; even in this country, where the standard of morality is higher than in almost any other part of the world; where, during several generations, not one depositary of our legal traditions has incurred the suspicion of personal corruption; where there are popular institutions; where every decision is watched by a shrewd and learned audience; where there is an intelligent and observant public; where every remarkable case is fully reported in a hundred newspapers; where, in short, there is everything which can mitigate the evils of such a system. But judge-made law, where there is an absolute government and a low morality, where there is no bar and no public, is a curse and a scandal not to be endured. It is time that the magistrate should know what law he is to administer, that the subject should know under what law he is to live. We do not mean that all the people of India should live under the same law: far from it; there is not a word in the Bill, there was not a word in my right honourable friend's

speech, susceptible of such an interpretation. We know how desirable that object is; but we also know that it is unattainable. We know that respect must be paid to feelings generated by differences of religion, of nation, and of caste. Much, I am persuaded, may be done to assimilate the different systems of law without wounding those feelings. But, whether we assimilate those systems or not, let us ascertain them; let us digest them. We propose no rash innovation; we wish to give no shock to the prejudices of any part of our subjects. Our principle is simply this; uniformity when you can have it; diversity when you must have it; but in all cases certainty.

As I believe that India stands more in need of a code than any other country in the world, I believe also that there is no country on which that great benefit can more easily be conferred. A code is almost the only blessing, perhaps it is the only blessing, which absolute governments are better fitted to confer on a nation than popular governments. The work of digesting a vast and artificial system of unwritten jurisprudence is far more easily performed, and far better performed, by few minds than by many, by a Napoleon than by a Chamber of Deputies and a Chamber of Peers, by a government like that of Prussia or Denmark than by a government like that of England. A quiet knot of two or three veteran jurists is an infinitely better machinery for such a purpose than a large popular assembly divided, as such assemblies always are, into adverse factions. This seems to me, therefore, to be precisely that point of time at which the advantage of a complete written code of laws may most easily be conferred on India. It is a work which cannot be well performed in an age of barbarism, which cannot without great difficulty be performed in an age of freedom. It is a work which especially belongs to a government like that of India, to an enlightened and paternal despotism.

I have detained the House so long, Sir, that I will defer what I had to say on some parts of this measure, important parts, indeed, but far less important, as I think, than those to which I have adverted, till we are in Committee. There is, however, one part of the Bill on which, after what has recently passed elsewhere, I feel myself irresistibly impelled to say a few words. I allude to that wise, that benevolent, that noble clause, which enacts that no native of our Indian

empire shall, by reason of his colour, his descent, or his religion, be incapable of holding office. At the risk of being called by that nickname which is regarded as the most opprobrious of all nicknames by men of selfish hearts and contracted minds, at the risk of being called a philosopher, I must say that, to the last day of my life, I shall be proud of having been one of those who assisted in the framing of the Bill which contains that clause. We are told that the time can never come when the natives of India can be admitted to high civil and military office. We are told that this is the condition on which we hold our power. We are told that we are bound to confer on our subjects every benefit—which they are capable of enjoying?—no; but which we can confer on them without hazard to the perpetuity of our own denomination. Against that proposition I solemnly protest as inconsistent alike with sound policy and sound morality.

I am far, very far, from wishing to proceed hastily in this most delicate matter. I feel that, for the good of India itself, the admission of natives to high office must be effected by slow degrees. But that, when the fulness of time is come, when the interest of India requires the change, we ought to refuse to make that change lest we should endanger our own power, this is a doctrine of which I cannot think without indignation. Governments, like men, may buy existence too dear. "Propter vitam vivendi perdere causas" is a despicable policy both in individuals and in states. In the present case, such a policy would not only be despicable, but absurd. The mere extent of empire is not necessarily an advantage. To many governments it has been cumbersome; to some it has been fatal. It will be allowed by every statesman of our time that the prosperity of a community is made up of the prosperity of those who compose the community, and that it is the most childish ambition to covet dominion which adds to no man's comfort or security. To the great trading nation, to the great manufacturing nation, no progress which any portion of the human race can make in knowledge, in taste for the conveniences of life, or in the wealth by which those conveniences are produced, can be matter of indifference. It is scarcely possible to calculate the benefits which we might derive from the diffusion of European civilisation among the vast population of the East. It would be, on the most selfish view of the case,

far better for us that the people of India were well governed and independent of us, than ill governed and subject to us; that they were ruled by their own kings, but wearing our broadcloth, and working with our cutlery, than that they were performing their salaams to English collectors and English magistrates, but were too ignorant to value or too poor to buy, English manufactures. To trade with civilised men is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages. That would, indeed, be a doting wisdom, which, in order that India might remain a dependency, would make it a useless and costly dependency, which would keep 100,000,000 of men from being our customers in order that they might continue to be our slaves.

It was, as Bernier tells, the practice of the miserable tyrants whom he found in India, when they dreaded the capacity and spirit of some distinguished subject, and yet could not venture to murder him, to administer to him a daily dose of the pousta, a preparation of opium, the effect of which was in a few months to destroy all the bodily and mental powers of the wretch who was drugged with it, and to turn him into a helpless idiot. The detestable artifice, more horrible than assassination itself, was worthy of those who employed it. It is no model for the English nation. We shall never consent to administer the pousta to a whole community, to stupify and paralyse a great people whom God has committed to our charge, for the wretched purpose of rendering them more amenable to our control. What is power worth if it is founded on vice, on ignorance, and on misery; if we can hold it only by violating the most sacred duties which as governors we owe to the governed, and which, as a people blessed with far more than an ordinary measure of political liberty and of intellectual light, we owe to a race debased by 3,000 years of despotism and priestcraft? We are free, we are civilised, to very little purpose, if we grudge to any portion of the human race an equal measure of freedom and civilisation.

Are we to keep the people of India ignorant in order that we may keep them submissive? Or do we think that we can give them knowledge without awakening ambition? Or do we mean to awaken ambition and to provide it with no legitimate vent? Who will answer any of these questions in the affirmative? Yet one of them must be answered in the affirmative by every person who maintains that we ought

permanently to exclude the natives from high office. I have no fears. The path of duty is plain before us: and it is also the path of wisdom, of national prosperity, of national honour.

The destinies of our Indian empire are covered with thick darkness. It is difficult to form any conjecture as to the fate reserved for a state which resembles no other in history, and which forms by itself a separate class of political phenomena. The laws which regulate its growth and its decay are still unknown to us. It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that, having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or to retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history. To have found a great people sunk in the lowest depths of slavery and superstition, to have so ruled them as to have made them desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens, would indeed be a title to glory all our own. The sceptre may pass away from us. Unforeseen accidents may derange our most profound schemes of policy. Victory may be inconstant to our arms. But there are triumphs which are followed by no reverse. There is an empire exempt from all natural causes of decay. Those triumphs are the pacific triumphs of reason over barbarism; that empire is the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THE position of Abraham Lincoln, when he was first elected President of the United States, is one of the most curious, interesting, delicate, and difficult in the history of the world. His majority was large, and he enjoyed the entire confidence of the Republican party. But in the Southern States there was no Republican party worth mentioning, and the Northern Democrats regarded him with undisguised suspicion. He himself, in the touching speech which he delivered to his fellow-townsmen on his departure for the capital, described his task as greater than that which rested on Washington. What was that task? It was simply to maintain the Union which Washington had founded. He disclaimed from the outset the idea that it was his business or his duty to abolish slavery. Long before the Civil War was over it became clear that abolition was inevitable. But when Lincoln was inaugurated, he still hoped that, though shots had been actually fired, a peaceful settlement might be found. He expressly and in terms declared that there would be no interference with the "peculiar institution" in the Slave States. All Territories, being subject to Congress, would be free, and any new State would be prohibited by its Constitution from recognising slavery. The real origin of the War was the assertion by the Southern States of a right to secede from the Union. Their secession would, of course, have created a great Slave Republic, and have led to incalculable consequences. But Lincoln steadily refused to look beyond the question of the Union. That, he said, it was the President's duty, as Head of the Executive, to enforce. He was sworn to do so, and he would keep his oath. It will be observed that the alleged right to secede without altering the Constitution of the United States, indeed without wholly transforming it, was entirely destructive of the Union. For there could be no

question of a good or a bad cause, a complete or an incomplete justification. The right of leaving the Federation implied the right of leaving it on the flimsiest as well as on the weightiest grounds. It was impossible for the Federal Government to say, " You are entitled to set up for yourselves, but only on a pretext satisfactory to us." The strength and the weakness of Lincoln's position lay in the fact that, on the one hand, the case for the Union was logically irresistible, while, on the other hand, it was only the abolition of slavery, which had to be kept in the background, that inspired the slightest enthusiasm.

First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES,—In compliance with a custom as old as the Government itself, I appear before you to address you briefly, and to take, in your presence, the oath prescribed by the Constitution of the United States to be taken by the President before he enters on the execution of his office.

I do not consider it necessary, at present, for me to discuss those matters of administration about which there is no special anxiety or excitement. Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States, that, by the accession of a Republican Administration, their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the public speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches, when I declare that " I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists." I believe I have no lawful right to do so; and I have no inclination to do so. Those who nominated and elected me, did so with the full knowledge that I had made this, and many similar declarations, and had never recanted them. And, more than this, they placed in the platform, for my acceptance, and as a law to themselves and to me, the clear and emphatic resolution which I now read—

"*Resolved*, That the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the States, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend; and we denounce the lawless invasion, by armed force, of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter under what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes."

I now reiterate these sentiments; and in doing so, I only press upon the public attention the most conclusive evidence of which the case is susceptible, that the property, peace, and security of no section are to be in any wise endangered by the now incoming administration.

I add, too, that all the protection which, consistently with the Constitution and the laws, can be given, will be cheerfully given to all the States when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause, as cheerfully to one section as to another.

There is much controversy about the delivering up of fugitives from service to labour. This clause I now read is as plainly written in the Constitution as any of its provisions—

"No person held to service or labour in one State under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labour, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labour may be due."

It is scarcely questioned that this provision was intended by those who made it for the reclaiming of what we call fugitive slaves; and the intention of the lawgiver is the law.

All members of Congress swear their support to the whole Constitution—to this provision as well as any other. To the proposition, then, that slaves whose cases come within the terms of this clause "shall be delivered up," their oaths are unanimous. Now if they could make this effort in good temper, could they not, with nearly equal unanimity, frame and pass a law by means of which to keep good that unanimous oath?

There is some difference of opinion whether this clause should be enforced by National or by State authority; but surely that difference is not a very material one. If the slave is to be surrendered, it can be of but little consequence to him or to others by which authority it is done; and should

any one, in any case, be content that this oath shall go unkept on a merely unsubstantial controversy as to how it shall be kept?

Again, in any law upon this subject, ought not all safeguards of liberty known in civilised and humane jurisprudence to be introduced, so that a free man be not, in any case, surrendered as a slave? And might it not be well at the same time to provide by law for the enforcement of that clause in the Constitution which guarantees that "the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of the several States"?

I take the official oath to-day with no mental reservations, and with no purpose to construe the Constitution or laws by any hypercritical rules; and while I do not choose now to specify particular Acts of Congress as proper to be enforced, I do suggest that it will be much safer for all, both in official and private stations, to conform to and abide by all those Acts which stand unrepealed, than to violate any of them, trusting to find impunity in having them held to be unconstitutional.

It is seventy-two years since the first inauguration of a President under our National Constitution. During that period, fifteen different and very distinguished citizens have in succession administered the executive branch of the Government. They have conducted it through many perils, and generally with great success. Yet, with all this scope for precedent, I now enter upon the same task, for the brief constitutional term of four years, under great and peculiar difficulties.

A disruption of the Federal Union, heretofore only menaced, is now formidably attempted. I hold that in the contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution the Union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination. Continue to execute all the express provisions of our National Constitution, and the Union will endure for ever, it being impossible to destroy it, except by some action not provided for in the instrument itself.

Again, if the United States be not a government proper,

but an association of States in the nature of a contract merely, can it, as a contract, be peaceably unmade by less than all the parties who made it? One party to a contract may violate it—break it, so to speak: but does it not require all to lawfully rescind it? Descending from these general principles, we find the proposition that in legal contemplation the Union is perpetual confirmed by the history of the Union itself.

The Union is much older than the Constitution. It was formed, in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774. It was matured and continued in the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was further matured, and the faith of all the then thirteen States expressly plighted and engaged that it should be perpetual, by the Articles of the Confederation in 1778; and finally, in 1787, one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing the Constitution was to form a more perfect Union. But if the destruction of the Union by one or by a part only of the States be lawfully possible, the Union is less than before, the Constitution having lost the vital element of perpetuity.

It follows from these views that no State, upon its own mere motion, can lawfully get out of the Union; that resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void; and that acts of violence within any State or States against the authority of the United States, are insurrectionary or revolutionary, according to circumstances.

I therefore consider that, in view of the Constitution and the laws, the Union is unbroken, and, to the extent of my ability, I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union shall be faithfully executed in all the States. Doing this, which I deem to be only a simple duty on my part, I shall perfectly, so far as is practicable, fulfil it unless my rightful masters, the American people, shall withhold the requisition, or in some authoritative manner direct the contrary.

I trust this will not be regarded as a menace, but only as the declared purpose of the Union that it will constitutionally defend and maintain itself.

In doing this there need be no bloodshed or violence, and there shall be none unless it is forced upon the National Authority.

The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government, and collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere.

Where hostility to the United States shall be so great and so universal as to prevent competent resident citizens from holding Federal offices, there will be no attempt to force obnoxious strangers among the people that object. While the strict legal right may exist of the Government to enforce the exercise of these offices, the attempt to do so would be so irritating, and so nearly impracticable withal, that I deem it best to forego, for the time, the uses of such offices.

The mails, unless repelled, will continue to be furnished in all parts of the Union.

So far as possible, the people everywhere shall have that sense of perfect security which is most favourable to calm thought and reflection.

The course here indicated will be followed, unless current events and experience shall show a modification or change to be proper; and in every case and exigency my best discretion will be exercised according to the circumstances already existing, and with a view and hope of a peaceful solution of the national troubles, and the restoration of fraternal sympathies and affections.

That there are persons, in one section or another, who seek to destroy the Union at all events, and are glad of any pretext to do it, I will neither affirm nor deny. But if there be such, I need address no word to them.

To those, however, who really love the Union, may I not speak, before entering on so grave a matter as the destruction of our national fabric, with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes? Would it not be well to ascertain why we do it? Will you hazard so desperate a step, while any portion of the ills you fly from have no real existence? Will you, while the certain ills you fly to are greater than all the real ones you fly from? Will you risk the commission of so great a mistake? All profess to be content in the Union if all constitutional rights can be maintained. Is it true, then, that any right, plainly written in the Constitution, has been denied? I think not. Happily the human mind is so

constituted that no party can reach to the audacity of doing this.

Think, if you can, of a single instance in which a plainly written provision of the Constitution has ever been denied. If, by the mere force of numbers, a majority should deprive a minority of any clearly written constitutional right, it might, in a moral point of view, justify revolution; it certainly would if such a right were a vital one. But such is not our case.

All the vital rights of minorities and of individuals are so plainly assured to them by affirmations and negations, guarantees and prohibitions in the Constitution, that controversies never arise concerning them. But no organic law can ever be framed with a provision specifically applicable to every question which may occur in practical administration. No foresight can anticipate, nor any document of reasonable length contain, express provision for all possible questions. Shall fugitives from labour be surrendered by National or by State authorities? The Constitution does not expressly say. May Congress prohibit slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say. Must Congress protect slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say. From questions of this class spring all our constitutional controversies, and we divide upon them into majorities and minorities.

If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the Government must cease. There is no alternative for continuing the Government but acquiescence on the one side or the other. If a minority in such a case will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent, which, in turn, will ruin and divide them, for a minority of their own will secede from them whenever a majority refuses to be controlled by such a minority. For instance, why may not any portion of a new Confederacy, a year or two hence, arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present Union now claim to secede from it? All who cherish disunion sentiments are now being educated to the exact temper of doing this. Is there such a perfect identity of interests among the States to compose a new Union as to produce harmony only and to prevent renewed secession? Plainly, the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy.

A majority held in restraint by constitutional check and limitation, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it, does, of necessity, fly to anarchy or to despotism. Unanimity is impossible; the rule of a majority, as a permanent arrangement, is wholly inadmissible. So that, rejecting the majority principle, anarchy or despotism, in some form, is all that is left.

I do not forget the position assumed by some that constitutional questions are to be decided by the Supreme Court, nor do I deny that such decisions must be binding in any case upon the parties to a suit, as to the object of that suit, while they are also entitled to a very high respect and consideration in all parallel cases by all other departments of the Government; and while it is obviously possible that such decision may be erroneous in any given case, still the evil effect following it, being limited to that particular case, with the chance that it may be overruled and never become a precedent for other cases, can better be borne than could the evils of a different practice.

At the same time the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the Government upon the vital question affecting the whole people is to be irrevocably fixed by the decisions of the Supreme Court the instant they are made, as in ordinary litigation between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own masters, unless having to that extent practically resigned their Government into the hands of that eminent tribunal.

Nor is there in this view any assault upon the Court or the Judges. It is a duty from which they may not shrink, to decide cases properly brought before them; and it is no fault of theirs if others seek to turn their decisions to political purposes. One section of our country believes slavery is right and ought to be extended, while the other section believes it is wrong and ought not to be extended; and this is the only substantial dispute; and the fugitive slave clause of the Constitution, and the law for the suppression of the foreign slave trade, are each as well enforced, perhaps, as any law can ever be in a community where the moral sense of the people imperfectly supports the law itself. The great body of the people abide by the dry legal obligation in both cases,

and a few break over in each. This, I think, cannot be perfectly cured, and it would be worse in both cases after the separation of the sections than before. The foreign slave-trade, now imperfectly suppressed, would be ultimately revived, without restriction, in one section; while fugitive slaves, now only partially surrendered, would not be surrendered at all by the other.

Physically speaking, we cannot separate; we cannot remove our respective sections from each other, nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced, and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other, but the different parts of our country cannot do this. They can but remain face to face; and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them. Is it possible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory after separation than before? Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws among friends? Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides, and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical question as to terms of intercourse are again upon you.

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing Government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it. I cannot be ignorant of the fact that many worthy and patriotic citizens are desirous of having the National Constitution amended. While I make no recommendation of amendment, I fully recognise the full authority of the people over the whole subject, to be exercised in either of the modes prescribed in the instrument itself, and I should, under existing circumstances, favour rather than oppose a fair opportunity being afforded the people to act upon it.

I will venture to add, that to me the Convention mode seems preferable, in that it allows amendments to originate with the people themselves, instead of only permitting them to take or reject propositions originated by others not especially chosen for the purpose, and which might not be precisely such as they would wish either to accept or refuse. I understand that a proposed amendment to the Constitution (which

amendment, however, I have not seen) has passed Congress, to the effect that the Federal Government shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of States, including that of persons held to service. To avoid misconstruction of what I have said, I depart from my purpose not to speak of particular amendments, so far as to say that, holding such a provision to be now implied constitutional law, I have no objection to its being made express and irrevocable.

The Chief Magistrate derives all his authority from the people, and they have conferred none upon him to fix the terms for the separation of the States. The people themselves, alone, can do this if they choose, but the Executive, as such, has nothing to do with it. His duty is to administer the present Government as it came to his hands, and to transmit it unimpaired by him to his successor. Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present differences is either party without faith of being in the right? If the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with His eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of His great tribunal, the American people. By the frame of the Government under which we live, this same people have wisely given their public servants but little power for mischief, and have with equal wisdom provided for the return of that little to their own hands at very short intervals. While the people retain their virtue and vigilance, no Administration, by any extreme wickedness or folly, can very seriously injure the Government in the short space of four years.

My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time.

If there be an object to hurry any of you, in hot haste, to a step which you would never take deliberately, that object will be frustrated by taking time; but no good object can be frustrated by it.

Such of you as are now dissatisfied still have the old Constitution unimpaired, and, on the sensitive point, the laws of your own framing under it; while the new Administration will have no immediate power, if it would, to change either.

If it were admitted that you who are dissatisfied hold the right side in the dispute, there is still no single reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favoured land, are still competent to adjust, in the best way, all our present difficulties.

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you.

You can have no conflict without being yourselves aggressors. You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the Government; while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it."

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break, our bonds of affection.

The mystic cords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

LORD DERBY

THE speech which Lord Derby delivered, as Lord Stanley, on the second reading of the Corn Law Bill in the House of Lords, is, perhaps, the ablest he ever made. The subject interested him profoundly, and he had elaborated his case with unusual care. As a rule, he was apt to speak at random, making and answering points in debate, but not going very deep into the question with which he had to deal. On this occasion, however, he had done his best to grapple with the facts, except the Irish famine, whose existence he boldly denied, and he really contrived to marshal as formidable an array of objections against the policy of free trade in corn as the Protectionist arsenal could furnish. They were set forth with the eloquence which seldom failed him, and with a clearness in argument to which he did not often attain. If their historic value has been a good deal diminished by the course of events, that does not disentitle the speech to a place in the records of British oratory as eminently characteristic of the orator himself. For though the orderly sequence and methodical arrangement of the facts and the reasoning are not always to be found in Lord Derby's speeches, there is quite enough here of the slashing rhetoric which distinguished him to mark this oration with the seal of its author. The purity of his English, and the energy of his style, are present in full force throughout the speech. It is therefore an excellent specimen of the form and manner which made Lord Derby known as "The Rupert of Debate." Lord Stanley, it will be remembered, had resigned office rather than consent to the repeal of the Corn Laws. He had thus put himself at the head of the Protectionist party, equally opposed to the Government of Sir Robert Peel and to the Whigs under Lord John Russell. But his protest against the Bill for repealing the Corn Laws

is a serious and deliberate attempt to justify resistance on social and economic grounds, mingled with a great deal of pungent invective and racy attack. There is much in it which recalls the memory of a reputation once conspicuous, now half forgotten, for resource and brilliancy in debate such as few contemporaries could rival, and none could surpass. Lord Derby's strength did not consist in disposing of the arguments on the other side, but of so arranging his own as to make it appear that there was no other side at all. His speeches were extraordinarily successful at the time, and were effective for their immediate purpose of convincing Lord Derby's audience that he had the best of the encounter. The present example, however, has also the more serious merits of logical cogency and argumentative power. It would be easy to find cases in which Lord Derby showed to advantage as the ready and brilliant coiner of epigrams and wielder of retorts. But it seemed desirable to bring out, as this speech does, some of his more important faculties, and to give a measure of the extent to which he could employ the materials for an effective defence.

Second Reading of the Corn Importation Bill

House of Lords, May 25th, 1846

I CAN assure your lordships that it is with the most unfeigned distrust of my own powers, but at the same time with the most unhesitating conviction of the truth and strength of the case which I have to support, that I venture to submit myself to your lordships' indulgence, while I enter into a defence of that system of law which has been designated by a noble earl on the other side of the house as absurd, and which has been most vehemently, but I can hardly say vigorously, assailed by those who have hitherto boldly and most strenuously defended it, and who were indeed among the principal framers of the existing Act. I feel, my lords, how much need I have of your indulgence, because I find myself unhappily, on this occasion, opposed, *impar congressus,* to all those who have been hitherto the leaders of both the great parties into which

this House and the other House of Parliament have been divided. But, however much and however painfully I may feel the inequality of the contest in point of ability, I cannot admit that the weight of authority is in favour of those who propose the abolition of the corn laws. My lords, I will not appeal—it would be invidious to do so—to the authority of the present, against the former, opinions of noble lords on either side of the House. I will not cite the opinions they may have formed, or the expressions they may have made use of; but, my lords, I will venture to appeal from the authority of the statesmen of the present day to all the great names among those who have been the most liberal commercial Ministers of England in times not long gone past. I will appeal to the authority of Lord Chatham, to the authority of Mr. Pitt, to the authority of Mr. Huskisson; and, my lords, while I mention their names, I will refer to those of others whose eloquence still rings in our ears—and would to God their wisdom and prudence were still directing our counsels—trusting I shall be forgiven by three of my noble friends who now occupy seats in this house, if I cite, in opposition to their opinions, the authority of those who first cast imperishable lustre on the names of Liverpool, of Canning, and of Grey. But I can appeal not only to statesmen of almost the present day—I can appeal against the statesmen of the present year to the authority of all those who have swayed the destinies of this country ever since it took a prominent place among the nations of the world.

The noble earl (Ripon) says this question was not raised by former Governments on the principle of protection; I say that if you search the records of our history from the earliest times, you will find in the most distinct form, from the preambles of successive statutes in successive ages, that the principle which guided the Ministers of this country was the principle of encouraging the domestic industry and protecting the agriculture of this country. As early as the time of Edward IV I recollect a memorable preamble, one which might almost be applied to a statute of the present day. It recites, if I remember the words—"That whereas the labourers and occupiers in husbandry"—not the great owners of land, observe, not the great proprietors—but "the labourers and occupiers in husbandry be grievously endamaged by the bringing in from foreign countries of corn into this realm when the price of corn

within this realm is low," and the statute with that recital goes on to prohibit the importation of corn, when the price here was below, I think, 6s. 8d. per quarter. The same principle has guided the Legislature of this country from that day to the present, varied according to the circumstances of the country, varied according to the exigencies of the times, varied according to the state of husbandry, and the state of our relations with foreign powers. But through all, without an exception, there has been maintained this principle, that in order to secure the independence of this country of foreign supplies for the food of its own people, it was the policy of this great country to give encouragement and protection to the cultivation of its own soil. But I will not be satisfied with appealing to home authorities. There is not one nation in the world of any eminence that has ventured up to this hour upon the bold and rash experiment upon which your lordships are invited to enter, of leaving the provision of the food of its people unrestrained by legislation, unprotected by fiscal regulation, and subject to mere chance, or worse than that—to chance controllable and controlled by the caprice, the enmity, or the inability to supply of foreign countries. I will go through the principal nations of the earth. France and Holland have both not only a system of protection, but both have a sliding scale, and France has a sliding scale infinitely more complicated and stringent than our own. Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the Germanic Confederation, Prussia, Portugal, Spain, the Roman States, Austria, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, and the United States of America. Have I gone through all the principal nations of the world? Not one of all these countries has ventured to leave its agriculture unprotected, or to allow the provision of the food of its people to be dependent on foreigners. And when I see all this, not only can I not admit that the weight of authority is with the opponents of the measure, but I venture to doubt the truth of that which has been put forward as an indisputable axiom—that the *primâ facie* inference is in favour of unrestricted free trade. On the contrary, I think the weight of authority, the authority of the past and the present, of this and of all other countries, nations with every variety of soil and climate, with every variety of density and sparseness of population, under all varieties of civil institutions, from the

most absolute monarchy to the most unrestricted republicanism, the combined authority of all times and countries is in favour of the system of protection. I dispute that which has been held to be an indisputable axiom—I contend that the inference, the *primâ facie* inference, is, that all former statesmen in this country, and all other countries at the present day, have not been alike wholly destitute of political wisdom and political sagacity. I cannot believe that not a single beam of enlightenment dispelled the universal darkness till that which flashed simultaneously and with such marvellous power of conversion upon the statesmen of the present age in the month of November last.

I hope I need not assure your lordships, and I am quite confident I need not assure the noble and gallant duke near me (Wellington), that however deeply I may deplore the course he has pursued as a Minister of the Crown, no words shall fall from me, in the course of the observations I shall have to offer, in the slightest degree inconsistent with the deep personal respect I entertain both for his public and private character, or tending to cast the shadow of a suspicion —which does not exist or find a place in my mind—upon the entire purity of the motives by which he has been actuated. Even if my noble friend's brilliant career and the pre-eminent position he occupies in this age and country, did not place him—I will not say beyond the reach of criticism—but above the apprehension of censure, the uniform single-mindedness of his character, his utter forgetfulness on all occasions of self, and his abhorrence of all that is low, mean, and selfish, would be a sufficient guarantee to your lordships and to the world, that whatever be the circumstances which have produced it, his decision has been formed upon a sincere, but, I respectfully think, a mistaken sense of what is best for the public interest. Nor, my lords, will I presume to doubt the sincerity of the conviction of my right honourable friend at the head of Her Majesty's Government, that this measure was called for by a great exigency. A man of far less sagacity and experience than my right honourable friend could not have failed to foresee that the inevitable consequence of this measure must be the dislocation and disruption of all those party ties without which, in my humble judgment, the affairs of this great country can never be steadily or safely conducted ;

he must have foreseen the shock it would give to public confidence in public men, to the confidence of constituents in their representatives, to the confidence of the country in the House of Commons, and, forgive me for saying so, in your lordships' house also, if you should unhappily imitate the too facile conversion of the other branch of the legislature. He must have known the embarrassment, the painful conflict and struggle between personal attachment and public principle, to which it would expose his warmest and most devoted adherents; he must have felt the injury he was doing to his own public reputation, and the diminution he was causing to his own means of future usefulness; I believe my right honourable friend foresaw all these circumstances, and therefore I cannot but think that he conscientiously believed the emergency of the case required this course to be pursued. But I think my right honourable friend fatally and unhappily mistook the character of that emergency, that he mistook the real judgment of the country. I think he committed the error the most fatal a statesman can commit—I think he mistook the brawling torrent of agitation for the still, deep current of public opinion. And it will not be the least unhappy consequence of this unhappy measure that this country and the world will believe—truly or falsely, justly or unjustly, I will not say—that a triumph has been gained by an organised and interested association over the Minister of the Crown, and that a still more fatal triumph has been gained by the Minister of the Crown, acting under the influence of that association, over his political supporters and the independence of Parliament.

With these observations I dismiss all that is personal with regard to this question. I will not be tempted to enter into personal motives by that general panegyric on inconsistency which has been pronounced by the noble marquis (Londonderry). But I must, in passing, express my regret that the noble marquis should have thought it becoming in him to cast a taunt upon those able, zealous, and conscientious men, who, abandoned by those in whom they formerly placed their confidence, have been put forward in an unwonted struggle, and in that struggle have exhibited ability, talent and courage which only reflect the greater credit upon them because for a long period of time, as long as they could confide

in those who formerly led them, they had modestly kept those talents concealed from public view. I say I will not enter upon personal considerations. I will not expose myself to the sort of attack intimated by the noble marquis; I will not quote a single page of *Hansard;* I will not go back to one previous opinion or one previous speech; I do not desire to appeal to your lordships' passions, but to your reason; I do not desire to aggravate the feelings of mortification, perhaps I might use a stronger word, with which you must regard those by whom you have been, to say the least, misled; I wish to omit all personal considerations; if, indeed, I were to enter into the question of consistency, I think I should have to direct my observations with tolerable impartiality to both sides of the house. I cannot concur with the noble duke (Cleveland), who thought that those on the other side of the house are entitled to say that on this question they are pursuing a consistent course. I take leave, with great respect, to remind noble lords opposite that, up to 1841, there was little or no difference of opinion among them as to the necessity of maintaining the then existing corn laws. The noble marquis has, I think, estimated at six the number of the minority of your lordships on that subject. And though since that period there has been a difference between the two sides of the house, it has not related to the question whether agriculture is entitled to protection or not, but simply as to its extent and amount, and the most efficient and politic mode of applying and administering that protection. And such I believe was the case down to that memorable month of November, 1845—down to the day when that *verbosa et grandis epistola venit,* which has caused many of your lordships to exclaim, "Oh, that mine enemy would write a letter"; from that period, and from that period alone, we can date the claim of noble lords opposite—if, indeed, there be a claim—to be considered the opponents of protection. It may be that some of your lordships who are about to vote for the second reading, desire to record your opinion against the principle of the sliding-scale, to give effect to your own conscientious, and I believe I may say, unaltered opinion in favour of a fixed duty. In that case I have nothing to say against your perfect consistency; but if you are about to join a Government for the purpose of abolishing all protection to agriculture in whatever shape, you

must not flatter yourselves that you are altogether free from the imputation of that inconsistency with which you are so ready to taunt Her Majesty's Government.

And now, I turn from the personal part of the subject and from the discussion of the question by whom the measure was proposed and supported, to the much more important matter, the arguments by which it is maintained. But here, I must say, we are met at the outset by a difficulty of rather a singular kind. When, in the other House of Parliament, we have asked the Ministers of the Crown a question—not, I think, an unfair or an unreasonable one—What do you anticipate will be the result of this measure? the simple answer given was that they must decline to prophecy: their prophecies failed in 1842, and they would not risk their reputation as prophets hereafter. If we ask what the effect of the measure will be, we are frankly told that they cannot say. Now, where is it that you are about to try this experiment, of which the Minister who brings it forward cannot tell what will be the possible or probable results? The old proverb says, *fiat experimentum in corpore vili;* try your experiments on some small scale, in some insignificant corner of the globe, in some inartificial state of society; try it where a mistake would not be irrevocable; where an error in judgment would not lead to such formidable consequences. But you are going to try this experiment in the wealthiest and mightiest empire of the world; you are trying it in this England of ours, the highest and mightiest among the nations of the world—that which is in the most artificial state of society—that in which the slightest derangement of the social scale, the slightest disturbance of the relations between the different classes of the community may produce the most extensive, serious, and irremediable mischief. And it is in this country, and supported by such arguments as you have heard from my noble friend to-night, that you are invited to try this great experiment, the issue of which the Minister of the Crown tells you he cannot foresee. It may be very well for an irresponsible body, like the Anti-Corn-Law League, engaged in an active and interested pursuit of their own objects—I do not mean to say not believing that their own personal interests are not inconsistent with the public interest—it may be very natural, if not very legitimate, for their agents, and those whom they

employ, to hold different language to different classes of the community; to speak to the manufacturing classes of cheap bread, of bread at half the present price, and wages double the present amount; to talk of a grinding aristocracy, of the plunder of the poor, of robbery by the monopolists, of the heartless landlords, and all those clap-trap phrases by which an ignorant multitude have been deceived and deluded; and then to turn round to the agriculturists of this country, and to tell them of the universal prosperity that will result from this measure, and to say, "Do not for a moment apprehend a fall in the price of your produce; the price will rise; far from losing you will only be sharers in the universal gain." Somehow or other bread is to be infinitely cheaper to the consumers—somehow or other you are to get a much better price for the corn you grow. But, my lords, if this conduct be natural or legitimate in the members of the Anti-Corn-Law League, it is neither natural nor legitimate in the first Minister of the Crown, wielding the authority of the Crown, speaking in the name of the Crown, exercising the influence of his high station, and his high character, and his high talents, to carry measures of deep and vital importance, of hazardous and doubtful policy. Your lordships and the other House of Parliament have a right to be told by the Minister, under such circumstances, what is the object at which he aims, and you have a right to canvass fully and distinctly, first whether the object be in itself desirable; and, next, whether the means which he proposes for effecting it are likely to attain that object if it be desirable. You have a right to know from the Minister what he calculates upon, as being the probable effect of this great measure.

My lords, in the silence of the Government upon this point, we turn to the arguments which they have made use of; and although certainly one of them has been in a considerable degree abandoned by my noble friend this evening, yet in the course of the discussions that I have heard, this measure has been rested mainly upon two arguments, namely, the apprehended famine in Ireland, and the operation of the tariff. Supposing always the famine to exist, it must be by bringing a large amount of corn into consumption at so low a price as to place it within the reach of the poorest and the most distressed of that starving population; but, if I am not mistaken in the boast which Her

Majesty's Government make of the successful operation of the tariff, it is this—that while it is materially extending commerce, it has not diminished, on the contrary, it has rather tended to raise the price of the articles which have been subjected to its operation. Let me, however, examine these two questions—the famine, and the operation of the tariff; and if, in entering upon this topic, I am compelled to trouble your lordships at much greater length than I desire, and to enter upon some details which may be wearisome, but which are certainly not unimportant to the decision of this great question, I must pray your lordships' indulgence, on the consideration that in entering upon these dry details I cheerfully and willingly sacrifice all advantage which I might derive from dwelling upon more exciting, because more personal, topics.

Now, with regard to the famine, I must beg to call your lordships' attention so far back as to the period of October and November last. The noble lord has told us that the famine was not the inducing cause of this alteration in the corn law being proposed. With all respect for my noble friend, I will venture to say—and I am confident I shall not be contradicted by any single friend of Her Majesty's Government—that if it had not been for the apprehension of scarcity in Ireland, and the supposed failure of the crops, your lordships would never have been asked—in the course of this session, at all events—to alter or repeal the corn law. When the Cabinet was called together in the close of October last, it was for the purpose of considering the state of Ireland. Papers were laid before us, representing the failure of the potato crop, the anxiety that was felt, the reports of certain learned professors —which reports, by the by, tended mainly to increase the anxiety, and, with all respect for whom, if their advice had been followed I believe the evil would have been aggravated. We were called upon to consider what steps should be taken for the relief of Irish distress; and it was for the relief of Irish distress, and it was in consequence of the supposed failure of the potato crop, that we were invited to open the ports by Order in Council, and thereby to suspend the operation of the corn law. My lords, I was of opinion then, and I continue of opinion now, that at the close of October, in the first place, the real state of the case with regard to the famine, or the apprehension of scarcity in Ireland, was wholly unknown

to the Government or to anyone else. Not above a third of the potatoes had at that time been dug up. Further, I believed then, and I believe now, that there never was a season in the history of Ireland when, so far from there being either famine or scarcity, there was so large a supply in the country of all descriptions of food for the consumption of the people. We were also told that foreign countries were taking steps to prevent the export of their supplies, that crops upon the Continent were short, and that if our supply failed we should have no means of renewing it from abroad. I certainly thought that was an additional reason against taking such a step as opening the ports, because the effect of this step, under such circumstances, would be to stimulate consumption at a time when, upon the hypothesis, it was desirable rather to discourage it, and that to stimulate consumption would be likely ultimately to aggravate the evil of distress, if indeed distress and scarcity existed. But I entreat your lordships to bear in mind the wide and manifest distinction between scarcity or famine, and great local and individual distress.

My lords, I speak of the famine as a vision—an utterly baseless vision—which haunted the imagination and disturbed the judgment of the Government. I speak in very different terms, and with very different feelings, of that amount of destitution and distress into which a large body of the small ottars in Ireland have been thrown by the partial or total failure of their potato crop; but I conceive that this is a kind of distress, this is a species of destitution, upon which your repeal of the corn law, whatever effect it produces upon the price of wheat, will produce no more effect, and can produce no more, than if you were to pass a law which should reduce the price of pineapples. The evil to these people is not that corn is dear, or potatoes dear; corn never was dear; the price of corn, in spite of all that took place, never rose to any very high pitch. The state of distress and suffering to which these people are exposed, arises from this, that they are not, as the labourer in England is, dependent for their subsistence upon labour and steady wages, the produce of their gardens serving to eke out their wages with some little additional comfort; but that they have invested their labour, invested their all, in the cultivation of some small plot of ground, for which they pay a large rent, and if the produce of that plot fails, they have

no labour to look to, their stock of provisions is gone, and having no means of employment, they have no prospect of obtaining money wherewith to purchase food to replace the potato crop which has failed. That is the cause of the distress of the small cottars of Ireland.

But now I pray you to mark another class, and it is not an unimportant one, a class which, including the families of those who compose it, comprises probably 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 of the people of Ireland, namely, the small farmers and occupiers in Ireland. In what state are they placed? Their system of cultivation is oats and potatoes; their potato crop had failed, or a great part of it was diseased; it was unfit for human food. It was not unfit for the food of animals, and many of them very wisely increased the number of their pigs, fattened them upon the diseased potatoes, and realised a very fair profit. But what was the compensation to a farmer of this class? Why, the potato crop had failed, but his oats were superabundant, bringing a very fair price; and he had in his superabundant oats the means of sustaining himself, and, in their price, of recovering in some degree the loss of his potatoes. And by way of relieving that man you propose, when he has lost his potatoes, to inflict a further injury upon him by reducing the price of his oats. Therefore, as applicable to the famine in Ireland—if famine there were—I took the liberty of recording my opinion against the proposed opening of the ports. At the same time, so strongly and so forcibly did I feel the importance of unanimity in the Cabinet—so strongly was I convinced of the injury done by the breaking up of any Government, that although entertaining serious doubts whether a suspension of the corn laws and the opening of the ports would be of avail, or might not even be injurious, I intimated my entire readiness to yield my own opinion and consent to a suspension of the corn law, provided a suspension was proposed. But when I was told, not exactly in the language of the noble marquis just now, who talked about a skilful general and an able diplomatist, making use of the best plea he could find, but still told that that temporary exigency, that passing emergency of apprehended scarcity in Ireland, was not to lead to a remedy commensurate in duration with the expected evil, but to be made the groundwork of suspending, for the purpose of not re-enacting, the corn law, I felt that I

could not take that course consistently with my own feeling as an honourable man; and that, with such ulterior views, to propose to Parliament to sanction the opening of the ports would be to lead those who were disposed to support us, into a snare and a delusion.

Your lordships are aware that the discussions at the close of October terminated by an adjournment of the question; several of my colleagues being of opinion with me that at all events we had not sufficient information to act upon. When the Cabinet met again in November, I was one of those who cordially concurred in those measures for the relief of Irish distress adopted by the Government; the chief of those measures consisting in the appointment of a Commission composed of the heads of those departments of the Government who would have the best opportunity of furnishing the population in case of distress with employment as the means of subsistence, of communicating with the Lords-Lieutenant of counties, establishing local committees in every district, compelling the landlords of Ireland to know the real state of their several neighbours and the degree of co-operation which would be expected of them, rendering assistance through the medium of the commissariat, even entering upon the very delicate task of regulating the markets by the transmission of food from one part of the country to the other to meet the consequences of local speculation, giving employment where local funds were insufficient, and laying in a certain portion of provisions in order to feed the destitute in the last extremity, when employment could not be found. I considered these measures applicable strictly to the case of Ireland. I considered that the abrogation of the corn law, unjustifiable in itself, could not be warranted upon that ground, and far from doing good would assuredly injure the people of Ireland. The question when the Cabinet met again was certainly different, but I confess it was with some surprise and no little disappointment that when the question was put to the Cabinet, not of an immediate issue of an Order in Council, but of an early summoning of Parliament for the purpose of proposing a virtual abrogation of the corn law, I found myself alone in my opposition. I felt deeply and painfully the prospect of separation from colleagues I esteemed. I felt most painfully the awful weight of responsibility which I found was about to devolve singly

upon myself. I am not ashamed to say that I asked for forty-eight hours to enable me to decide upon the course I should pursue. My lords, it was no sacrifice to me to abandon office; on the contrary, I had most rigidly to examine my own mind whether I were unduly influenced to an obstinate perseverance by my anxious desire to escape from the responsibilities and labours of public life; I tried to school myself into the belief that, under certain circumstances, the interests of the country might require even a sacrifice of personal and public character. My lords, I could not bring myself to so humiliating a conclusion, and most reluctantly, but without difficulty or doubt, supported as I was by one of my colleagues, whom I am not at liberty to name but whom if I could name, I am quite sure his position and his character would satisfy all your lordships, that in subsequently rejoining the Government he could be actuated by none but the most honourable motives, I was compelled to tender the resignation of my office. Upon that the Government of Sir Robert Peel was broken up. Your lordships are all aware of the circumstances which followed. I did not at that time trouble your lordships with explanations which might possibly lead to controversy; and I owe an apology to your lordships for digressing now, even for a moment, from this important question to a matter personal to myself.

My lords, we are called upon to abandon the corn law of 1842. And why? In what respect has it deceived your expectations? How has it falsified your prophecies? Your prophecies have been realised to a wonderful degree of accuracy. In what respect has it failed? The object of this, and of every corn law, I take to be to place this country in a state of virtual independence of foreign countries for its supply of food. I know that object may be scouted by some of the very enlightened politicians of the present day; but it was not thought unworthy the consideration of great men not long passed away from among us; and if your lordships will forgive me for referring to it, I will quote a passage from a letter of Mr. Huskissson, which puts the whole question in a few words in the clearest light in which it can be seen. He was writing at the close of the war, and his sentiments are worthy of the deepest attention. We have forgotten the circumstances of that time—some of us, indeed, are too young to remember them, but, generally, we seem not to remember

in dealing with this question the evils to which, prior to 1815, this country had been subjected from its dependence for a supply of corn on foreign countries. On that occasion Mr. Huskisson said—

The present war, it is true, is now at an end; but peace is at all times too precarious not to induce us to guard against the repetition of similar calamities whenever hostilities may be renewed. But even in peace the habitual dependence on foreign supply is dangerous. We place the subsistence of our own population not only at the mercy of foreign powers, but also on their being able to spare as much corn as we may want to buy. Suppose, as it frequently happens, the harvest in the same year to be a short one, not only in this country but in foreign countries from which we are fed, what follows? The habitually exporting country—France, for instance—stops the export of its corn, and feeds its people without any great pressure. The habitually importing country, England, which, even in a good season, has hitherto depended on the aid of foreign corn, deprived of that aid in a year of scarcity, is driven to distress bordering upon famine. There is, therefore, no effectual security, either in peace or war, against the frequent return of scarcity approaching to starvation, such as of late years we have so frequently experienced, but in our maintaining ourselves habitually independent of foreign supply. Let the bread we eat be the produce of corn grown among ourselves, and for one, I care not how cheap it is. The cheaper the better. It is cheap now, and I rejoice at it, because it is altogether owing to a sufficiency of corn of our own growth. But in order to secure a continuance of that cheapness and that sufficiency, we must ensure to our own growers that protection against foreign import which has produced these blessings, and by which alone they can be permanently maintained. The history of the country for the last 170 years clearly proves, on the one hand, that cheapness produced by foreign import is the sure forerunner of scarcity, and on the other, that a steady home supply is the only safe foundation of steady and moderate prices.

Now, my lords, you aim then, by a corn law, at an independence of foreign supply, accompanied and produced by such an encouragement to your home-grower as shall guarantee him up to a certain point, against foreign competition, and shall, beyond that point, protect the consumer against exorbitant and extravagantly high prices, protecting all parties against that which is most injurious to all—rapid and sudden fluctuations. Now, I say, that beyond any law which has ever been in force in this or any other country, this law of 1842 has accomplished these, its great and main objects. First, with regard to the provision of a home supply, we have no statistical tables in this country (and it is a great pity that we have not) by which we could ascertain, year by year, the amount of the

production of the country; but if it can be proved that in a state of society in which the population is increasing as rapidly as has been stated by the noble earl, and in which, let me add, the proportion of wheat consumers is increasing more rapidly still, the population of this great country has not alone had a sufficiency to meet the increased demand, but has had that sufficiency at a reduced price, and with a diminished and not an increased supply from abroad, then, my lords, I maintain that the inference is that protection has fully effected its object, and that by its means we have been enabled to keep pace with the increasing demand of our increasing population. I will show you, my lords, that this has been the case. I must take a series of years, because the quantities imported must necessarily vary largely from year to year, and this whatever may be your legislation; for these fluctuations are dependent on the seasons, over which you have no control. You may provide by legislation that on an average a larger or a smaller portion of your supply shall be drawn from abroad, but whether you have a sliding scale or a fixed duty, or no duty at all, the annual amount of import must greatly vary. In a bad year you will import more; in a good year less, whatever be the state of your law. But looking at the tables which have been laid before your lordships, I find that, speaking of wheat alone (and I shall confine myself throughout to wheat, and not weary your lordships with unnecessary details with regard to other grain, the principle being the same in all) in the course of these last twenty years we have imported 21,432,000 quarters of wheat. The yearly average for the last twenty years amounts to 1,071,000 quarters; for the last three years to 741,000 quarters; and in the course of the last year it was 308,000 quarters. Has this result, I would ask, been produced by any increased price of wheat at home?

A great number of fallacies have been made use of and statements attributed to us, who defend this corn law, which we never uttered. We are constantly told that the intention of this corn law was to guarantee to the farmer the price of 55s. a quarter. The intention of the corn law was no such thing. My right hon. friend, in introducing the measure, stated that if, by legislation, he could fix the average price of corn, he would fix it from 54s. to 58s. The avowed object of the corn law, therefore, was this, that when the price is above

58s. the consumer should be protected against any other competition than that which he can engage with upon equal terms—namely, competition with those who are exposed to the same vicissitudes of the same climate, and who have the same advantages and are subject to the same burdens and restrictions with himself. What has been the result of the corn law as far as the consumer is concerned? I find that the average price of wheat for the last twenty years has been 57s. 4d. a quarter, whilst the average price for the last three years, since the corn law passed, has only been 50s. 9d., and the price last year, which we have been told was a period of great scarcity, was 50s. 10d. My right honourable friend stated his wish to keep the price between 54s. and 58s., and since the passing of the Bill the annual average price has not risen above 50s. 9d., or 50s. 10d. But a return laid before the House of Commons gives a more accurate test of the operations of the sliding scale, and of the manner in which it acts to check the tendency to a rise of price whenever that tendency is exhibited. The paper I allude to is a return of the weekly price of corn in every week from March, 1844, to March, 1846; and with respect to these 104 weeks, the result was that the price has been between 54s. and 58s. in no less than forty-three of those weeks; the price has been below 54s. in fifty-four other weeks; the price has been above 58s. in seven weeks only, and the price has never risen in any one week above 59s. So far, therefore, as concerns the consumer, has he any right to say that the corn law has deceived any expectations he had a right to form of it? Now, although it is quite true that the prices of corn have fallen considerably below that which was anticipated by my right honourable friend, if we look to the total amount imported since the great influx of 2,500,000 quarters immediately after the passing of that measure, we shall find that of 2,000,000 quarters which have come in since that time, there have been entered under 55s. only 305,000 quarters; between 55s. and 59s., the actual point at which we desired to limit it by the bill, 1,475,000 quarters; and between 59s. and 62s. 261,000 quarters. I conceive, therefore, the law has operated in the manner and nearly to the extent it was expected to operate. Another great and important point respects the fluctuation in the price of corn. Since this corn law passed, the fluctuation of price

which has taken place between 1844 and 1846 is only from 58s. 4d. down to 45s. 2d. The whole difference between the highest week and the lowest week in these two years is not a difference of 30 per cent. The greatest weekly fluctuation in the price, between any one week and the succeeding, is 1s. 6d., and the greatest fluctuation in any period for the whole four weeks of the month is a fluctuation of 4s. and no more. When this corn bill was introduced in 1842, I recollect it being put forward as a matter of boast, that the corn laws as they then stood had produced only a fluctuation of 49 per cent. in any one year, while the existing corn law has produced only a fluctuation of 30 per cent. in two years. But let us look to the fluctuation of price in other countries from the month of December, 1844, to December, 1845. Observe that in two years the total amount of our fluctuation has been 30 per cent., while in that one year the fluctuation at Dantzic was 56 per cent.; at Hamburg, 86; at Rostock, 78; at Stettin, 84; at Odessa, 50; and at Alexandria, 54. Perhaps you may tell me that this is the effect of our own sliding scale, and of our corn law operating upon prices abroad. Then I will refer you to America. In 1842, my right honourable friend the Secretary for the Colonies moved for a return of the *maximum* fluctuation of price in the markets of America from 1834 to 1840, and, according to that return, the greatest fluctuation in any one year, was, in New York, 70 per cent.; in Philadelphia, 76; in Portsmouth, 72; and in New Norfolk, 62. The account of these fluctuations has been carried down to the present time, and between the years 1841 and 1846 whilst our fluctuation never exceeded 30 per cent. between 1844 and 1845, and whilst in the market of Montreal, which ought, if the argument of my opponents is just, to have been the most affected by our corn laws, the fluctuation did not exceed 17 per cent. on the price of last year. I find in New York in one year a fluctuation of 51 per cent.; in Philadelphia, 50, in Richmond, 76; and in Baltimore, 90. As far, then, as the experience of three years has gone, no law in this or any other country has produced so great a steadiness of price with cheapness as the law of 1842, which your lordships are now called on to abandon. But if your lordships wish to refer to a period of the greatest fluctuation in this country, refer to the period between 1792 and 1805, a period when there was the greatest dependence

on the foreigner. Hear, on this subject, the evidence of Mr. Malthus, in a pamphlet written by him in the year 1814. He says, "During the last century, the period of our greatest importation and dependence on foreign corn was between 1792 and 1805, and certainly in no four years of the whole 100 was the fluctuation so great. In 1792 the price was 42s.; in 1796 it was 77s.; in 1801, it was 118s.; and in 1803, 56s. So that between 1792 and 1801 the price was almost tripled; and in the short period between 1798 and 1803 it rose from 50s. to 118s., and fell again to 56s., and that in that period of the history of this country in which we were most dependent on foreign supply." If it were necessary to prolong the discussion on this point, I would ask your lordships to look to the fluctuations of price in other articles. You are told that the fluctuations in the price of corn are attributable to the sliding scale. Look to the fluctuations in the price of potatoes. There is no sliding scale as respects them; but there is free trade. They may be imported from anywhere, and they pay no duty. Yet I know that the price of potatoes varies from 100 to 150 per cent. in the course of a single year. Then, again, look at the price of upland cotton. No sliding scale affects it, and the demand is regular and steady. Yet if you look at the price of upland cotton in Liverpool in 1836, 1837, and 1838, you will find that it was in January, 1836, 8½d. per lb.; in March, 11½d.; in January, 1837, 10¼d.; in May, 5⅞d.; in December, 8½d.; and in April, 1838, 5d. I ask, is there any fluctuation in corn to be compared with this?

Now I trust I shall be excused for adverting to another point of importance, namely, the supply which our corn laws procure for us and keep on hand to meet possible emergencies. I will recall to your lordships' recollection what was the state of the different countries of Europe at the commencement of the present year. There existed a great apprehension of scarcity among all, and measures were taken for their own protection and security, and that I may not be supposed to misrepresent in the slightest degree the facts of the case, I will read from a statement made by my right honourable friend the First Lord of the Treasury. After stating the apprehensions of scarcity felt by various foreign powers, my right honourable friend goes on—

"From Belgium, dated the 24th of September, we heard that

the Chambers had sanctioned the proposal of the Government to prohibit export and permit import. Egypt, on the 22nd of October, prohibited the exportation of all corn arriving at Alexandria after that day. Turkey prohibited the export of all grain from the ports of Anatolia and her Asiatic provinces from the 27th of August, 1845, to harvest-time in 1846. Sweden prohibited the export of potatoes from the 15th of October till the next harvest. There was, indeed, at this period a general apprehension of a scarcity of provisions, extending from Sweden to Egypt, and from Riga to Turkey, and measures were taken to stop their exportation, and for excluding us from some of our usual sources of supply."

This shows that the moment a pressure takes place measures are taken by these countries to stop the exportation of food, and deprive us of the opportunity of obtaining it from them. We were also told to stop the export of provisions, to take off the duty on import, to prohibit the use of grain in distilleries. We took none of those steps. We trusted to the operation, the steady, quiet, certain operation, of our existing corn law. I believe that the best test of scarcity is to be found, not in the report of learned professors, but that there is a much better barometer as to that point, and that is the price of food in the market. The self-acting operation of the corn law did not come into effect, and because it did not, its authors said that it was a sliding-scale that would not slide. Of course it would not, and for this good reason, because there was not a deficiency in the country to increase the price. By relying on the operation of the corn laws what was the result? What was the amount of corn in bond at the close of the year 1845 to meet the exigencies of our demand? I am not talking of the amount in bond now, which has most unfortunately accumulated in consequence of the introduction of this measure; and which may now come in with a ruinous effect on the market. I am speaking of the amount which your corn laws provided in bond at a time of universal scarcity. The average quantity in bond in December for the last twenty years has been 445,000 quarters; and the highest amount in bond in December in any previous year was 899,000 quarters. But in December last, in face of the difficulties in Europe, in face of the established prohibition of export, we had in bond in waiting for an exigency that did not come, 1,106,000 quarters.

Will any man, then, tell me that the corn law has failed in the essential points of keeping us, in the main, independent of foreign supply, in securing cheapness and steadiness of price, and in providing for us an abundant foreign supply in case we should require to make up any deficiency in this country? Will any man seriously contend that this great advantage resulting from the corn law has been purchased by the sacrifice of commercial interests? Is there any man who does not know the enormous and unparalleled strides which this country has made in commercial and manufacturing industry, I do not say on account of, but I will say notwithstanding, the operation of the corn laws? Since 1827 the exports of this country have increased from £36,000,000 in value to £58,500,000, and in the course of those years the import of cotton alone has increased from 177,000,000 lbs. to 721,000,000 lbs. In the course of the period since 1814, while the value of landed property, as shown by the property tax paid in respect of Schedule A, has increased from £39,300,000 to £45,750,000, being an increase of about 16 per cent., the increase on Schedule D, showing the profits of trade, manufactures, and professions, has increased from £35,800,000 in 1814, to £64,344,000 in 1842, being an increase of no less than 84 per cent., against 16 per cent. increase in the value of land. Have, then, these corn laws been inconsistent with manufacturing prosperity? and why are we now invited to enter upon this great experiment? It is for the purpose, I suppose, of still further expanding the manufacturing activity of the country. I belong to a manufacturing county, and no man is less inclined than myself to depreciate the great advantages derived from the manufactures of this country, the great increase they have caused in the wealth of the nation, and in many cases the addition they have given to the comfort of the labouring classes. But this system of manufacturing activity is not without its attendant drawbacks and dangers. It is a system which requires to be steadily and carefully watched rather than to be unduly pampered and fostered. Manufacturing industry is subject to constant, great, and rapid fluctuations. Its powers of production are always overtaking the powers of consumption. A period of prosperity is invariably followed by the glutting of every market in the world, and by a corresponding period of

adversity. Do nothing, for God's sake, to check the prosperity of manufactures; but do not be led by unwise legislation to promote and pamper an unwholesome increase, which, when the bubble bursts, involves all in serious evils.

But if it is certain that the increase and extension of manufactures are desirable, it is not clear to my mind that the repeal of the corn laws would have the effect of increasing manufacturing industry. If there be no great reduction in the price of corn in consequence of this measure, it needs no demonstration to show that there will be no largely increased consumption of corn; and if there should be no great increase in the consumption of corn, the consequence is, that there will be a transference of business, to the same and no greater extent, from customers in this country to customers abroad, and that would be all. Are we to believe the argument of the successful operation of the tariff? We are told that the price of wool has risen, and also of timber, silk, butchers' meat, and I know not what besides. I must say, however, that of all the bold paradoxes ever palmed on the credulity of mankind, and passed, upon the authority of great names, for sovereign and supreme wisdom, the boldest and most laughable is this—that increased competition tends to raise the price of those articles which are the subject of it. Reason is against it; and more, facts are against it. True, the reduction of a halfpenny per pound on wool last year, taking place at a thriving period of your manufactures, did not check consumption; the demand for the article went on increasing more than the supply, and the fall was not felt. But what happened in 1825, when Mr. Huskisson reduced the price 6d. per lb.? My noble friend on the cross benches recollects that Mr. Huskisson reduced the price from 6d. to 1d.; and that, while from 1819 to 1824 the average price of Southdown wool was 1s. 4d., it was from 1825 to 1830 only 10d., being a reduction to the full amount of the duty. If you talk of silk—I will not enter into the details of the silk trade—but admitting for the sake of argument, what I think not quite clear, that the silk manufacture is in a better state than it would have been under a system of greater protection, this fact is notorious, that, simultaneously with the removal of the prohibition from the manufactured article, you largely reduced the duty charged upon the raw material; and your lordships must allow me to

remind you, moreover, that after the prohibition was removed, the silk manufacture of this country was, and has been to the present moment, protected by a duty averaging no less than 30 per cent. on the price of the article. I need not ask you about timber. It is quite true the price of Baltic timber has not fallen to the full extent of the reduction of the duty, though, I believe, the Canadian timber has; but what has been the effect on the price of the article in this country? I hold in my hand a return showing the money price for 50 cubic feet of timber for three years previous to the tariff, showing a mean price of 103s. 9d.; while since the tariff the mean price is 91s. 3d., and last year only 86s. 8d. I ask my noble friend at the head of the Woods and Forests, if he has any doubt of this, whether the Government did not some short time ago offer for sale some timber and bark in the Forest of Dean, and whether he was not obliged to withdraw it without sale? [VISCOUNT CANNING.—It was sold.] Was it? Then what was it sold for? I will not enter upon the question as to the rise in price of butchers' meat, or the various causes which have led to that increase. Your lordships are well aware of the deficiency of the home supply and of the causes of that deficiency; a deficiency which has not been in any sensible degree counterbalanced by the comparatively trifling importations from abroad. I find the total amount of sheep imported has been 7,113; and I find that in one single market, in Smithfield, the falling-off was from 27,370 in the week ending the 14th April, 1845, to 16,240 on the 13th April, 1846. Here, my lords, is the explanation, and a very sufficient explanation, of the rise in butchers' meat, not on account of, but notwithstanding, the limited operation of the tariff.

I contend that, under this proposed abrogation of the law, there will be a large reduction in the price of corn. But before I leave the question of the tariff, I may be permitted to refer for a moment to the effect the tariff has had upon British shipping. Great stress has been laid on this point. Prices were to fall, but the tariff was to have the effect of immensely increasing our commercial activity in the employment of British shipping. A great deal has been said of the increase in the amount of our shipping employed between 1842 and 1845. But, my lords, how does this case stand with reference to the tariff—to which I was a consenting party, because I thought it would have a tendency

to settle prices when there was a tendency to extravagant prices; and because I thought it would tend, moreover, to expose the home grower to such an amount of competition (and no more) as he could fairly and safely meet. The principle of the tariff was protection, and not prohibition. The principle of the tariff was competition; but my notion of competition was this—that you must have the competing parties placed upon an equality to start from, and that unless you have this equality of circumstances in the competing parties, your principle of free trade may turn out to be the most rank and entire monopoly. Now, what has been the increase of British shipping employed under the new tariff? The tonnage of vessels belonging to different ports of the British Empire in 1842 was 3,619,000 tons; in 1844, it was 3,636,000 tons; showing in two years an increase of 17,000 tons. Now, since 1833, there has been a progressive annual increase in the amount of your shipping tonnage each year, with one exception, surpassing the year preceding. The total amount of that increase has been 985,000 tons, and the average biennial increase 197,000 tons. But the increase in the two years since the adoption of the tariff has been 17,000. Is that all? Now I will show you a branch of the shipping trade of this country in which there has been a large increase, and which compensates for the very large deficiency which would otherwise have been presented in the last two or three years—a branch, certainly, for which the tariff can take no credit, and which depends, and has depended, upon the prosperity of agriculture and the argicultural improvements encouraged by the system of protection. I refer to the number of ships engaged in the guano trade in the years 1843 and 1845. You may smile and think this is an inconsiderable branch of trade; but what has been the increase in the tonnage and number of ships employed in it? That trade commenced in 1841. In 1843, the tonnage of British ships engaged in the guano trade was 4,056 tons, and it afforded employment to 202 seamen. In 1845, British shipping of the tonnage of 219,000 tons, and 11,434 British seamen, were employed in the trade. There was, therefore, an increase of above 200,000 tons of shipping in the guano trade alone, to set against an increase in our whole commercial marine of 17,000 tons since the tariff was adopted. Now, I contend that, under the proposed

law, there will be a considerable fall in the price of corn, though not equal to the reduction of the duty. I do not think it is very difficult to estimate at what price we may expect to have a large quantity of foreign wheat brought into this country under the Bill now before us. I do not found my calculation on the prices at Dantzic or Riga or elsewhere. We are now called upon to legislate on the experience of the tariff. I find that, at a price of 55s., we had, as was expected, a very large importation of foreign corn. Now, at 55s., the duty is 15s. We had then a large importation of corn, realising to the importer something below 40s. a quarter. We may, therefore, fairly anticipate that when the duty is taken off, we shall have a large importation of foreign corn at 40s., inundating our markets, and making 40s. a quarter pretty nearly the *maximum* price you can ever expect to realise.

I fear, my lords, I am troubling you at too great length. I am ashamed to do so; but this is a great question. I feel that I am arguing it very imperfectly and feebly, but I trust your lordships will bear with me for a few moments. I this morning received a letter from a gentleman, who describes himself to be the head of the oldest firm engaged in the corn trade in Liverpool. He writes as follows—

I beg to inform your lordship that I hold in bond two cargoes of fair red wheat, which were imported early last year from Ibraila, on the Danube, at a cost of 14s. per quarter free on board ship, the freight to Liverpool being 9s. 6d. per quarter, and I do not hesitate to give it as my deliberate opinion that if the measure now before your lordship's House be suffered to become law, we shall, after the expiration of three years, be annually in the receipt of 5,000,000 quarters of foreign wheat and flour (probably more), provided the seasons be ordinarily favourable, and our average prices admit of the sale of it at not less than 36s. to 40s. per quarter gross in England, the duty being 1s. per quarter as proposed.

Between September, 1844, and May, 1845, during the whole of which time the price was permanently from 45s. to 46s., and the duty 20s., there were entered for home consumption 120,000 quarters of wheat, which, consequently, realised to the importers from 25s. to 26s. a quarter. But I am not absurd enough to suppose that if the duty had been taken off, because these parties could afford to import and sell corn at from 25s. to 26s. therefore they would not have done so. These parties would have derived very large profits from their importation, and what would have been the result?

There are many districts of country on the Continent, larger,

perhaps, than many of your lordships imagine, which might be devoted to the growth of corn. Look, for example, at the plains of Hungary. There you have very considerable districts admirably qualified for the growth of wheat, to the cultivation of which the opening of your markets will give great encouragement. But even supposing that no great addition be made to the area of the corn-exporting countries, there can be no doubt that the application of skill and capital to the improved cultivation of the land, would give to the cultivator a far greater amount of produce from the present area than it now yields. Your calumniated and ill treated farmers can produce about 28 bushels to the acre; in hardly any other country is the produce more than 14 bushels to the acre. A large profit is derived by importers from these countries. This tends to the application of capital to the improvement of the soil. The continued application of capital and skill enables the cultivator to produce his corn much more cheaply, and the same effect will be produced by the application of capital to improve and facilitate the means of shipment. My objections to this measure, therefore, are not lessened but rather aggravated by the fact that you will not feel the injury it entails all at once, but that, gradually and progressively, the importation of a larger and larger amount of foreign supply will be encouraged by your legislation, and will by degrees drive out of cultivation a larger and larger amount of corn land in this country.

But it is said that when the price of corn falls the manufacturers will obtain a great outlet for their goods, and will be able to sell them at a much cheaper rate. But how are they to sell them much more cheaply than at present? How is this cheapness to be effected? If it is to be effected at all, it will be effected by a reduction of wages. I thought it was the favourite doctrine of the Anti-Corn-Law League, I know it is a view which has been taken by some members of Her Majesty's Government, that the price of corn has nothing to do with the amount of wages. As I have said, it is anticipated that by the repeal of the present corn law, the manufacturers will be able to produce their goods more cheaply. I do not exactly understand how they can do this without paying their labourers lower wages. Now I do not mean to say that either in the manufacturing or the agricultural districts the rate of wages

exactly or regularly follows the price of corn; certainly, it does not follow all the fluctuations in the price of corn. I say that wages, like everything else, are regulated by the proportion between the demand and supply. In proportion to the demand for labour, the working classes are ready to enter into competition for that labour at such a rate as would afford them a given amount of the necessaries and comforts of life. But that amount of the necessaries and comforts of life must be ultimately measured by money; and, consequently, the competition remaining the same, if a lower amount of money would procure the same amount of the necessaries and comforts of life, the price of labour must fall in proportion as the price of corn falls. I do not say, however, that it will follow all the fluctuations of corn. This is an important point.

It is of vast importance to the labouring population that the price of corn should be steady, be it high or be it low. The labourer, when prices are low, has not the prudence or foresight to economise his earnings, and when the pendulum swings the other way he is too often plunged into a state of distress. It is, then, in the absence of fluctuation from one extreme to another, and not on the average money-rate of wages, that the comfort of the labourer mainly depends. If, however, the labourer's money wages are to be reduced, he ought, I think, to have fairly stated the balance of the advantage and disadvantage to which he is about to be exposed under this system. Take the case of a man with a wife and family of three children in the manufacturing districts. I will make a large allowance, and suppose that they consume five quarters of wheat in the course of a year. I will assume that there is a permanent fall of 10s. in the price of wheat. A diminution of 1s. per week from the wages of any one member of that family (and you can hardly suppose that any diminution would be less than that) more than counterbalances all the advantages he and his family would derive from a reduction of 50s. in the price of the five quarters of corn they consume.

But, then, we are told that, even if manufactures do not become cheaper, trade will increase largely, from the necessity, on the part of foreign countries, of taking our goods in exchange for their produce. This argument assumes that Russia, Prussia, and the United States do not take our manufactures because we receive their corn in exchange. There never was

argument less founded on fact than that. The fact is, with regard to all those countries, that at the present moment our imports from them largely preponderate over our exports to them, and the duties we impose upon their goods—aye, even upon corn and timber—are far lower than the average amount of duties which all those countries charge upon the principal articles of our manufacture which we export to them. Take the case of our trade with the United States. You may, perhaps, be surprised to learn that the value of the cotton alone which we take from the United States in the course of a single year, far exceeds the value of all the goods put together which we export to the United States in the same period. For a period of five years, the average value of our imports to the United States has been £5,700,000 a year. For a period of eighteen years it has averaged about £7,000,000 a year. Now, assuming that we take four-fifths of our whole supply of cotton from the United States, and that that cotton is worth 4d. per lb. (a low average), our imports of cotton alone from the United States have amounted in those five years to £39,087,000, or an average of £7,817,000 per annum. Since 1827 our imports of cotton have increased from 177,000,000 lbs. to 721,000,000 lbs., while our exports during the same period have remained stationary.

I may refer on this point to an authority which would not be disputed, that of the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, and I beg those noble lords who advocate a system of reciprocity, and who anticipate those great advantages which we are to derive from taking a large quantity of the produce of the United States, of Russia, and of Prussia, to bear with me while I quote from this report from the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States to his Government, the fact that during the last six years the average value of the imports into the United States from British possessions had been 354,000,000 of dollars, leaving a balance of 101,000,000 dollars in favour of the United States. "This," the Secretary observes, "is the nominal balance, but there should be about 25 per cent., at least, added to this to make up the real balance. The exports given in the above table are made up according to the home valuation, and the returns from the shipments would, of course, be increased by any profits that may be realised in foreign countries. There has

been a balance in our favour in each of the past six years, and, with one exception (1836), in each of the past nine years. It appears by these statements that our foreign trade is yearly becoming more profitable to the United States. Our export trade in annually increasing, while our imports remain about the same. . . . Any modification made in the corn laws of Great Britain, permitting the introduction, on reasonable terms, of our bread stuffs, will give an additional impetus to our export trade, and prove of immense advantage to the producers of this country, by giving an outlet for our surplus produce. On the other hand"—well, what? Of course the writer goes on to expatiate on the great benefits arising from a mutual interchange of commodities, on the large influx of British manufactures, on the blessed effects of this increased commerce upon the friendly relations subsisting between the two powers. He refers to the indissoluble links in which we are bound by commercial advantages, and he seems ready to congratulate us and his countrymen that the little cloud in the west seems to have passed away. Not at all—"on the other hand," the Secretary goes on to say, "every improvement or increase made in our manufacturing establishment serves to supply the home demand for cotton and woollen manufactures, and tends to reduce the importation of these articles." This, then, is to be the result of a liberal measure for allowing the importation of bread stuffs from the United States. If you flatter yourselves that by such a measure you will gain any advantage for your manufactures, undeceive yourselves; the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States tells you that they will soon be able to dispense with your assistance, and that they will not require your manufactures. Then with regard to Russia, Mr. McGregor states that in 1838, the total exports of that empire were valued at £11,996,000, of which £6,977,000 were imported to Great Britain. The average value of the exports from Great Britain to Russia is £1,633,000, leaving a balance of £5,300,000 in favour of Russia. The declared value of our exports to Prussia is £505,000, and the estimated value of our imports is £3,138,000.

You talk about a duty of 25, 30, or 50 per cent. upon timber as an extravagant and prohibitory duty. By the United States tariff, the duty upon our woollens and silks is 40 per cent., upon our cotton, ale, and porter, 50 per cent.; upon coals,

60 per cent.; and upon paper, 75 per cent.; and their duties upon various other articles of our manufacture, which are principally articles of export, range from 45 to 150 per cent., and upon glass amount to 243 per cent. But the tariffs of Russia and Prussia are equally restrictive. "Russia," says Mr. McGregor, "may be said to prohibit the importation of every material which can be drawn, by the labour of her serfs, from her mines and forests, and every foreign manufactured article, in order that the labour of these serfs, with the aid of machinery either imported or made in the country, and directed by skilful foreign artisans, shall be made to produce articles either similar to, or that may be substituted for, those of foreign manufacture." Those articles of your manufacture, the importation of which is not prohibited by Russia, are subjected to an average duty of 65 per cent., ranging upon some articles, for instance, glass, to 900 per cent. And yet the argument is boldly put forward that it is our protective system, imposing, as it does, a duty of about 25 per cent. upon the importation of corn, which prevents us from receiving the produce of those countries which levy a duty of 60, 70, or 100 per cent. upon our manufactures. In 1839, Dr. Bowring, who was employed by the then Secretary of State in prosecuting some inquiries on this subject, reports as follows—

August 7, 1839.—I have put prominently forward the subject of cotton and woollen manufactures; I have been asked what we were disposed to do, I have mentioned that the question of the timber duties might be opened, and any other minor subject interesting to the Prussian Government. On these grounds they are willing to treat. Prussia will propose and support a great reduction of the duty on cotton fabrics; she will also recommend a new classification of woollens, so that the duty shall press less heavily on the low qualities; the extent of the reduction will depend on the powers which England has of meeting her, and I hope your lordships will favour me with early instructions.

And again the same year—

It is clear, however, that the amount of changes to be obtained here is wholly dependent upon the views and powers of the Government at home, and to our own legislation. I have put forward the points which interest us most, viz.: *reductions on the duties on cottons, woollens, hardware, and pottery.* The general reply is that Prussia will recommend diminished duties on these articles, and will try to give effect to her recommendations, *if we can obtain liberal modifications of the corn and timber duties in Great Britain.* I have explained all the difficulties of these questions, but still am very anxious to obtain from the Prussian Government specific declarations that if such and such changes take

place in England, they will be met by such and such changes here. *The head of the Customs says they will entertain a proposal for a general reduction of the duties on cottons, and for a classification of the duties on woollens, so as to relieve the lower qualities of the prohibition which the system of taking the duties by weight brings with it, and for lowering the duties on hardware and pottery; the groundwork of the understanding to be, that so much shall be deducted if the duties on timber are lowered so much, and so much more if a fixed duty be laid on wheat, instead of the present fluctuating scale. I have not found any of the authorities here expecting the introduction of their corn into England duty free.*

Well, my lords, we have reduced the duty on timber "so much," and we are about to do, with respect to corn, more than any of the Prussian authorities ventured to expect; and now let me ask my noble friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, how much has Prussia done, and how much does he expect she will do in reference to our cottons, woollens, hardware and pottery? What has been the effect of the reductions we have already made in the duty on timber, with regard to our exports of cotton to the northern states of Europe? Since 1841, our imports of timber have increased from 351,000 loads to 642,000 loads. Now in 1843 we exported to Russia, Prussia, Denmark, and Sweden, 2,200,000 yards of plain cotton; now we export only 2,000,000. We then exported 1,200,000 yards of printed cottons; now we export only 970,000 yards. Your imports of timber have nearly doubled, but your exports to these people, in spite of Dr. Bowring's prediction, have fallen off instead of increasing.

I suppose, at all events, that your shipping trade has improved.

I have been told that British merchants will not engage in the corn trade because it is speculative. Speculation is the basis of all trade. Take off what duties you please, the corn trade must be eminently speculative, because it is dependent on the seasons and the probable demand in this country. But it is said, our merchants are too wise to engage in these speculations. It is said they are unsuited to the character of the British nation. It is said that hazardous speculations leading possibly to great risk, and possibly to great gain, are so adverse to the character of the people of this country, that it is not likely any great number of persons would engage in them. And this is said in the year 1846. Well, but the timber trade is not a speculative trade. We have opened that trade. Our shipping, of course, has entered largely

into that trade. Listen to a fact which is of great importance. In 1839 the Baltic trade employed 612 British ships against 566 foreign ships. In 1845 it employed 609 British ships against 1,845 foreigners. In 1839 there were 6,016 British seamen employed, against 6,300 foreign seamen; in 1845 there were 5,375 British seamen employed, against 17,169 foreigners. But even if I were to admit that you might produce a large increase in your manufactures for a time, under a system of free trade, that you might puff up your manufactures with a brief but extraordinary prosperity; when that fails, as it will fail—when the day of difficulty and distress comes—when war intervenes! I think my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would feel much more easy in the event of a war with the United States (which God forbid!) if, instead of drawing four-fifths of our cotton from the United States, we drew four-fifths of it from our own territories. But, when war comes, these markets will be closed against you. You will have destroyed the home market, and when you have destroyed the home market, and the foreign market fails you, then comes the period of depression; then come the bitter sufferings of the manufacturers; then comes the bitter feeling of reaction against those who are now deluding their unhappy dupes with the prospect of cheap wages and of cheap bread.

Now, my lords, I have spoken of the home market. Don't let your lordships, and don't let the country, undervalue the importance of the home market. If you were to believe certain cotton manufacturers—if you were to believe what has been put forward in another place—you would believe that seven-eighths of the whole quantity of cotton goods are exported, and that the consumption of cotton goods among the population of this country amounts to little more than 2s. per head. Your lordships will judge of the accuracy of that statement, when I tell you that in 1840 the consumption of the West Indies was, not 2s. per head, but £1 6s. per head of the population. I cannot believe that when the West Indies consume £1 6s. per head of your cotton goods, the population of this country consume only 2s. per head. Now, I don't hesitate to state my conviction that the home market of this country is to the foreign as forty to seventeen. In the year 1820 there were exported 248,000 yards of cotton made up into goods.

In 1844 that quantity was increased to 1,046,000 yards, or nearly fourfold; but in consequence of the immense fall in price that fourfold increase in quantity produced an increase of only one-fourth in the value. The value was £17,612,000 against £13,000,000 in the former year. In 1823, Mr. Huskisson estimated the value of cotton goods consumed in England at £32,000,000; and I find that the home consumption, deducting all that had been exported was 73,000,000 of lbs. weight in the year 1820, and that it had increased to 280,000,000 of lbs. weight worked up for goods, employing British labour, and paid by British consumers, in 1843. Allowing that there has been a proportionate reduction in the price of articles of home consumption, that the increase, therefore, of fourfold amount has only been one-fourth in value, your whole consumption in 1843 was worth—and it is much more now—£40,000,000 sterling, against an export of cotton goods to the value of £17,612,000. £40,000,000 is a low estimate for the amount of cotton goods worked up and consumed in this country; and if I take the great articles of produce of this country—cotton, woollen, linen, silk, coals and culm, iron, hardware, brass, copper, leather, saddlery, cabinet wares, and papers—of which the exports amount in value to £48,344,000; at a low estimate the total amount produced is £250,000,000, thus leaving nearly £200,000,000 out of the £250,000,000 for the consumption of the home market. Now, my lords, that is the market you are now called upon to endanger; these are the customers you are about to sacrifice in your blind zeal to promote the export trade by your "cheap bread," and the importation of foreign corn.

But then I am told by the manufacturers, "Surely, a reduction in the price of corn will necessarily cause an increase in the consumption." That is not quite so clear. There may be a diminution in the price of corn, but cheapness and dearness, my lords, are relative terms; they are not positive terms. An article may be cheap in point of money cost, but very dear in point of ability on the part of the consumer to purchase. Wheat is cheaper in Ireland than in England—cheaper in Poland than in Ireland; but wheat is not more within the reach of the population of Poland than of the population of England, and, paying an infinitely higher price for articles of consumption, the ability of the consumer to purchase makes the articles

virtually cheaper—that is to say, more within his reach; and he is, therefore, able to consume more of them. Therefore it does not follow because you reduce the price of corn, and thereby diminish the cost of your manufactures, that you increase the consumption of manufactures, and that, therefore, your home consumers will be able to take a larger, or even the same amount as at present.

I have gone over a great part of this question, and I know how I have trespassed upon your attention. I come now to the question, "Upon whom will this loss fall?" I saw lately in one of the French newspapers an article upon the probable effect of the destruction of the corn law, and there was this philosophical argument made use of:—"*Quand même ces millionaires d'Anglais perdraient le quart de leur revenus ils n'en jouiraient pas moins des doucurs de la vie.*" Now I, for my part, am not satisfied to have one-fourth of our incomes taken away, though we may have some of "the sweets of life" remaining. Something has been said, in language unfairly and unjustly misapprehended—something has been said about the difficulty of administering the affairs of the Government and reconciling the conflicting claims of "an ancient monarchy, a proud aristocracy, and a reformed House of Commons." Now, my lords, I entirely put by the erroneous interpretation given to that expression. I admit the sentiment, I admit the difficulty, and I admit further than that: I admit that you are bound not to legislate for a class. You are not to legislate for the interest of one class against the interest of another; but this I say, that if you materially alter the social relations of the different classes of the community in this country—if you lower one at the expense of another, it is not a private injustice, but a public injury that you inflict upon society; and whatever may be the difficulty of keeping the balance between the "ancient monarchy," the "proud aristocracy," and the "reformed House of Commons," rely upon it, my lords, the difficulty will not be less, if for "a proud"—in the proper sense of the word—you substitute a "pauper and dependent aristocracy." And if you do, rely upon it, you break down in that "proud aristocracy," the firmest breakwater and the safest barrier between that limited monarchy and that spirit of democracy which is fitly represented in the reformed House of Commons.

Do not mistake me when I speak of the aristocracy. I do not speak exclusively, I do not speak mainly, of that body which I have now the honour to address. I speak, my lords, of the great body of landed proprietors of this country. I speak of men unennobled by rank, and many of them undistinguished by great wealth, but who, and their ancestors before them, for generations after generations, have been the centre each of his respective locality—who have the *prestige* of old associations attached to their names; who conduct the business of their respective counties; who influence the opinions and feelings of their respective neighbourhoods; who exercise a modest and a decent hospitality, and preside over a tenantry who have hereditary claims upon their consideration and affections. My lords, these are the aristocracy of this country to whom I allude. Reduce these men, and you inflict an irretrievable and irreparable injury upon the country. Lower them in the scale, and you have deranged the social machine beyond the power of correction. God forbid that the successful manufacturer or that the princely merchant should not take his place among the landed aristocracy of this country. Such infusions add fresh vigour and power to that class of the community; but depend upon it, if you sweep that class away at once, with all the associations attached to their names, their families, their histories, and the previous associations which belong to the character of their families, and substitute a new body of capitalists, to come amidst an unattached tenantry and a neighbourhood where no associations are connected with their names, the moral effect of the loss of that influence will be irretrievable.

I say I should not be satisfied if I were to believe that the loss would mainly fall upon the proprietors of this country, but I am satisfied that there never was so great a delusion as this. Why, a reduction of 10s. a quarter on wheat is equivalent to a reduction of 40s. an acre on a great portion of the wheat lands of this country, and accompanied by a corresponding reduction in the price of other articles that will go far to eat up the whole rental of the landed proprietor. My noble friend on the cross benches most ably argued this part of the case, and I will not therefore dwell at any great length upon it. The fact is, that the loss will fall—aye, and they know it will fall—they showed by their feelings the other day that it will

fall, not mainly on the landlords, but on the tenant-farmers. The first step these tenant-farmers will take to relieve themselves will be to suspend improvements—will be to discharge the labourers—will be to reduce wages—will be to drive those unhappy labourers into the manufacturing districts, to enter into hopeless competition there for the lowest class of employment in manufacturing labour, carrying their own wretchedness to pine away in the manufacturing towns, adding to the already grievous competition for employment, and thus pressing down the wages of the manufacturing operatives as well as those of agricultural labourers. What would be the consequences to the landed proprietors of the country? I will assume even the case of one unencumbered by debt, whose income is entirely clear, though I fear such cases are the exception rather than the rule. But what is the first thing he does? He dismisses a portion of his establishment. It is no great sacrifice of real comfort to him, but it turns into the labour market a great number of competitors for labour whom his fortune has employed; and, mind you, whatever else may be said against the landed proprietors of the country, I do not think that it can be charged against them that they are a class of men accumulating and hoarding wealth, and not spending their incomes at least as fast as they receive them. Well, then, they reduce the employment. And now mind what we are told, "True, but you may make up any loss to yourselves. You have only to act up to the real principles of free trade." Well, what are these principles of free trade? They are, to dismiss every useless and unprofitable hand. They are to employ no men beyond those who are absolutely required to make a profit for themselves. They are to have no consideration whatever for the tenants who may have been upon the land for fifty years. No; it is more profitable to have one large farm than three small ones. Pull down two or three houses of human beings and establish one great farm—it is cheaper and will keep up your rents. Your new tenants have capital, the others have none—let them go and starve. There are not above 600,000 tenants whose holdings are under £200 a year—at least, there were not in 1814. Do not stop at such a "drop in the ocean" as that. Turn them adrift; bring new tenants from a distance, from the Anti-Corn-Law League, place them on large farms,

encourage them to spend capital, and then you will be able to recover all the injurious effects of a fall in the price of corn; that is, if the law does not prohibit it. But, my lords, the law imposes upon you the burden, even if your own feelings would not revolt at such a system—the law imposes upon you the burden of maintaining all the poor. But I have too good an opinion of the landlords of England to believe that they would act on such principles. I believe that to the extent of their ability they would go on giving the utmost amount of employment that they could. I believe they know that they have to deal, not with stocks and stones, but with men, human beings, with the same feelings, the same attachments, the same affections as themselves. And I do not believe that, under the pressure of the greatest difficulty, the landlords of England as a body would adopt for their own protection the cold and selfish and calculating doctrines of free trade.

But, my lords, if this system is to be adopted in England—if you venture to recommend this system in England, will you dare to advise that it should be carried into execution in Ireland? In Ireland the bulk of the population are small farmers, holding farms which vary from one to twelve acres,—a farm of fifteen acres is a large farm. They have no capital and but little skill. They exhaust the land. I admit it. They do not pay half the rent which the employment of greater skill and capital would extract from the land. Carry your political economy into effect there and see what would be the result. I think I have heard it advanced that the clearance system is at the root of half the evils of Ireland. But free trade requires it, and you must make more money. Turn them out, and when the existing generation is starved off, you may, perhaps, see your system in successful operation. My lords, he must be a bold Minister who would advise such an experiment to be made, but he must be a bold as well as a hard man who would act upon it. And then to tell me that this measure—this repeal of the corn law—is brought forward as a measure of relief to Ireland above all! I understand what you mean when you talk of relief to England. England is an importing country; it may be for the benefit of her population, though I doubt if it be found to be so in the long run, that the price of corn should be greatly lowered; but then, as to Ireland, whose exports are exclusively agricultural, and

which is entirely an exporting, not an importing country—to say that you are benefiting Ireland by reducing the value of those exports by which alone she can obtain a return of the comforts of life and the articles of manufacture which she receives from you to the extent of £1,500,000, or £2,000,000 sterling a year, is a proposition which I would place by the side of that other paradox, that increased competition tends to raise prices.

Lastly, and I am sure your lordships will be glad to find that I am drawing to a close, I must call your attention to one branch of the question so important that it cannot be overlooked, and upon which from the situation I lately had the honour of holding, I feel that I am entitled to address you. I allude to the effect which is to be produced, not by the repeal of the corn law, but by the principles of free trade, and the doctrine of the removal of protection, upon the colonies. Now your foreign trade takes a very large amount of foreign shipping, and a very small amount of British shipping; I beg to call your attention to the fact, in the first instance, that by a return laid before the House of Commons in the year 1845, the tonnage of ships to your colonies was 1,273,395 tons British, entered inwards, against not one single ton foreign. Cleared outwards there were 1,263,432 tons British, against 3,702 tons foreign; your colonial trade, therefore, being, as it always is, exclusively carried on in British ships, employing British seamen and giving the profit of the trade on both sides to British subjects exclusively. I will not enter upon the extent of that trade. But here are a certain number of the colonies, the exports to which in the year 1844, amounted to no less than £14,247,714.

And now, my lords, allow me to say in passing, that when we calculate the amount of the export trade of this country, we include in that export trade, which bears so small a proportion to the home trade—we include in that trade the trade which goes on with your colonial empire, and amounting to one-third of the whole. Now, destroy this principle of protection, and I tell you in this place that you destroy the whole basis upon which your colonial system rests. My lords, if you do not know the advantages of your colonies, Napoleon Bonaparte knew them well. It is by your colonial system, based upon the principles of protection, that you have extended

your arms—I do not mean your military arms, I mean your commercial arms—to every quarter and every corner of the globe. It is to your colonial system that you owe it that there is not a sea on which the flag of England does not float; that there is not a quarter of the world in which the language of England is not heard; that there is not a quarter of the globe, that there is no zone in either hemisphere in which there are not thousands who recognise the sovereignty of Britain—to whom that language and that flag speak of a home, dear, though distant, of common interests, of common affections—men who share in your glories—men who sympathise in your adversities, men who are proud to bear their share of your burdens, to be embraced within the arms of your commercial policy, and to feel that they are members of your great imperial Zollverein.

It was said, I think, by Mr. Cobden, that a system of protection is a system of mutual robbery. I admit that it is a "mutual system"; it is a system under which, and in accordance with which, each surrenders some advantage to himself for the purpose of partaking in the general advantage of all—it is a system by which each sacrifices something of the profits of his own trade, for the purpose of ensuring a reciprocal advantage from others. I am not sure that it would not be found in the end that a certain reciprocity of profits—a system in which both parties gain, both parties are secured against hostile interference, against foreign intrusion, against foreign caprice and foreign hostility—would, in fact, in the long run, be that of which we heard so much, "buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest"; and that, even though the profits might not be readily or distinctly expressed in a money value. Sure I am, that whatever disadvantage may be sustained by the trifling additional amount of a protecting duty on articles of colonial produce, and whatever may be the small amount added to the cost of the British article under a protecting duty, still the disadvantage is amply compensated by the extension of our power over the wide world—by securing for us in every quarter friends and allies—by securing for our people certain employment, uninterfered with by foreign competition—and by employing a vast amount of British seamen, ready to act at any moment in defence and for the sustainment of the strength of the empire. I

will coincide with Mr. Cobden in the correctness of his representation of the system of "protection," if he will substitute for "mutual robbery" a system of "mutual insurance." I say, then, that upon the system of protection is based the whole of our colonial system.

I know that your political economists are for casting off your colonies; that they say, let them trade with us, or with any other country—give them the free advantage of free trade—let us not restrain them—as they are removed from all protection, let them also be free from all burdensome duty. I do not say that I have any doubt as to the loyalty of these colonies, for I have no doubt of their attachment; but I do say that you should not do anything to weaken that attachment—that you should be very careful that, in granting commercial independence, you do not take a step to their political independence. You cannot tell them to trade freely with all nations without also telling them to look no longer to you as their protectors. You tell the emigrant that from the time he sets sail from your shores, he is no more to you than a Dutchman, a Frenchman, or an American. You say to him, "Wherever you may be placed, you shall be entitled to no favour from us, and you will get from us no protection; you are like all other foreigners, and you are just as much connected with them as with us."

We are now upon the question of corn; but apply this general principle to that particular article and mark the results. Look at the trade with Canada, and see what will be the consequence of the abrogation of the corn law. I have heard this put forward as a great boon to our American colonies. I do not exactly see how. At the present moment wheat from the American colonies can be introduced into the market here subject to a duty which never exceeds 5s. a quarter. Upon the payment of a duty not exceeding 5s., Australia has an exclusive admission to the protected market of this country. You are about to take away the duty of 5s. the quarter, which, it is said, prevents Australian corn from being introduced here, and then if corn falls in price 5s. a quarter, so far is Australia from being benefited, that it is placed in a worse position than it was before. And now what have you done with regard to Canada? You introduced a Bill in which you promised to Canada a great advantage in the British market.

You presented it to Canada as a protected market, and upon the faith of what you had done, she imposed a duty of 3s. upon corn and flour taken from America. You encouraged Canada to make a large outlay of money in improving the communication by the St. Lawrence; you even lent her money for that purpose; you are now about to render that outlay valueless. You are going to break the promise you made to Canada. You are going to destroy the trade you fostered and encouraged. Nay, you are going to do much more; you are going to destroy the improved communication of the St. Lawrence; you are going to make the port of New York the channel of commercial intercourse between this country and Upper Canada, instead of your own St. Lawrence. Those who know that colony know that I am speaking the truth, and nothing but that. It is a matter almost of indifference to the grower whether wheat grown in the western states of the Union and in Upper Canada is carried to New York or Montreal. The communication with New York is somewhat cheaper and easier. The market of Montreal regulates the price of the markets of New York; but now the corn of the western states and Upper Canada comes down the St. Lawrence, employing British shipping, and that in our own territory, because there is a differential duty in favour of its arriving by way of Montreal and against its coming by way of New York. But if this measure passes that will be changed, and the corn will come, not by your own St. Lawrence, in ships navigated by your own countrymen, but through the United States; and I will tell your lordships what is the fact. There are merchants in Montreal who, in anticipation of this measure passing, are preparing to set up their establishments in New York. I say nothing of the effect you are producing upon the feelings of the people. I will say nothing of the shock you will give to the loyalty of the people; but I say this, you are doing your utmost to irritate them by your breach of your engagement to them.

My lords, I will not enter into details, but I will venture to remind your lordships that as political independence may follow closely upon commmercial independence, so political dependence on another state may also follow upon commercial dependence upon it. Are the United States blind to this fact? Do they not see the nature of your suicidal policy? Are

your lordships aware of the Bill passed by the Congress one or two years ago? That a Bill was passed, actually granting a drawback to the full amount, or almost so, of the import duty upon goods going into the seaports of the United States, provided those goods were carried through the United States and reshipped to Upper Canada; and that a Bill is now pending in Congress for the purpose of extending the import of goods from Canada, to be reshipped to this country from the port of New York? Will that fact of the policy of the United States open your lordships' eyes to the nature of the policy which you are pursuing?

Again, your lordships have read, or, if not, I hope before you come to a decision upon this measure you will read, the despatch of the Governor-General of Canada. This despatch has been laid on the table of Her Majesty's Government. It is from their representative, Lord Cathcart, who has been recently appointed. It is addressed to the Government, not in his own name, but in that of the whole executive Council of Upper Canada. He thus writes—

My attention having been very earnestly called by the members of the Executive Council of this province to the apprehensions they have been led to entertain by discussions which have recently appeared in the English newspapers, pointing strongly to a change in the corn laws, I am induced, at their earnest desire, even with no better foundation, to bring the subject under your consideration by the mail which leaves this night, as the opportunities for communication are so infrequent as to produce inconvenient delays. The province of Canada is so vitally interested in the question, that it is a duty of the executive of the province to urge on the consideration of Her Majesty's Ministers a full statement of the necessity of continuing a protection to the colonial trade in wheat and flour, and of the effect of any changes by which the protection hitherto given would be taken away. The improvement of the internal communications by water was undertaken on the strength of the advantage of exporting to England our surplus wheat and flour by Quebec. Should no such advantage exist, the revenue of the province to be derived from the tolls would fail. The means of the province to pay principal and interest on the debt guaranteed by England would be diminished, and the general prosperity of the province would be so materially affected as to reduce its revenue derived from commerce, thus rendering it a possible case that the guarantee given to the public creditors would have to be resorted to by them for the satisfaction of their claims. The larger portion, nearly all of the surplus produce of Canada is grown in the western part of it, and if an enactment similar in principle to the Duties Drawback Law should pass Congress, permitting Canadian produce to pass through

the United States for shipment, and the English market was open to produce shipped from American ports on as favourable terms as if shipped from Canadian ports, the larger portion of the exports of Upper Canada would find its way through the canals of the state of New York, instead of those of Canada, rendering the St. Lawrence canals comparatively valueless. The effect of the Duties Drawback Law has been to transfer the purchase of sugar, tea, and many other goods to New York, from whence nearly all of those articles for the supply of Upper Canada are now imported. Should such a change in the export of Canadian produce take place, it will not only injure the Canadian canals and forwarding trade, but also the shipping interest engaged in carrying these articles from Montreal. A change in the corn laws, which would diminish the price the Canadian farmers can now obtain, would greatly affect the consumption of British manufactures in the province, which must depend on the means of the farmers to pay for them. An increased demand and consumption has been very perceptible for the last two years, and is mainly attributable to the flourishing condition of the agricultural population of Upper Canada. Even if a relaxation of the system of protection to the Colonies is to be adopted, it is of infinite consequence that it should not be sudden. The ruin that such a proceeding would cause is incalculable. The political consequences to the Government of the Colony involved in the foregoing suggestions are sufficiently obvious, as also must be those arising from the trade of Upper Canada being, as it were, transferred from Montreal to New York.

I do not wish now to urge this matter further. I desire but to show you what effect this corn law will have upon the single province of Canada. I have stated the case of Canada and the corn laws, and having shown the effect which this measure will have upon the individual province of Canada, I will not trespass upon your lordships' attention by entering into details with respect to other colonies or the effects which a similar course may have upon them. But there is one other point I must refer to.

When we are told it is essential for the advantage of the manufacturers of this country that free trade should be established, and that no advantage should be derived by the colonies, I presume that if you deprive the colonies of all the protection they now enjoy, you intend to repeal that Act of Parliament which compels the colonies to impose a differential duty in favour of your produce. I can conceive no grosser injustice than your refusal to do that. Protection is mutual, free trade must be mutual also. One-third, and more than one-third of your manufactures goes to the colonies. Hear now what is the language of Mr. Greg, a distinguished member of the

Anti-Corn-Law League, as to these markets—the neutral markets—in which you are exposed to competition—

"At present," says Mr. Greg, "we are undersold by foreigners in neutral markets in all the staple articles of English manufacture. In the articles of cotton, hosiery, and cutlery, which amount altogether to three-fourths of our exports, this is notoriously the case. In cotton fabrics the Swiss undersell us in several markets. In cutlery, Sheffield is immensely undersold by Alsace, and our exports are yearly decreasing. In hosiery the case is still worse. Saxony is driving us, not only out of the foreign markets, but out of our own. In hosiery we used to supply three-fourths of the American demand. We now scarcely supply any. Saxon hosiery, after paying a debt of 20 per cent., is sold in London 25 to 30 per cent. cheaper than the produce of the Leicester and Nottingham looms. In Leicester the stocking frames have diminished from 16,000 in 1815, to 14,000 in 1840; whilst in Saxony in the same time they have increased from 4,590 to 25,000. How far," says Mr. Greg, "with cheaper food, no taxes on the raw material and no duties but for the sake of revenue, we might yet recover our lost superiority is a matter for grave consideration. I do not believe we could either in woollens or hosiery, and even in cutlery or the cotton trade I think it very doubtful. The machinery of foreign nations even now is not inferior to our own and is daily and rapidly improving, and the capital is fast accumulating, and the yearly interest of it approximating to our own rate. In the only remaining cost of production, that is the wages of labour, foreign nations have a decided advantage, and although a free trade in provisions, might do something, by lowering them here and raising them abroad, I doubt if it ever could be entirely recovered; yet better education, more sober habits, more frugality and general forethought, together with cheaper food, will, no doubt, enable our people to live in much greater comfort than at present upon considerably smaller earnings."

This, then, is the language of Mr. Greg, one of the leaders of the Anti-Corn-Law League; and he, on the part of the manufacturers, frankly intimates that the last chance for the success of what is called free trade resolves itself into a reduction of wages and cheapness of food. It is the last desperate experiment; and when you are called upon to give up markets

which, because they are protected, take one-third of your manufacture; when you are called upon to do this, to damage the home market, the proportion of which I take to be to the whole foreign markets at least as four to one, and this upon the chance of finding markets abroad, I really must say that the force of folly can no further go. I trust that you, my lords, will not be led away by any fanciful delusions upon this subject. I trust that you will not, in yielding to these delusions, consent to sacrifice the home producer.

I am sensible, though I have spoken at great length, how feebly and imperfectly I have performed the duty I desired to discharge. I know that I must have wearied your lordships. I know that I must indifferently have fulfilled my task, but I do hope that your lordships will give me credit for having kept closely to the subject; and I hope, further, that I have redeemed the pledge that I gave at the outset—that in no observation that I might make, if I could possibly avoid it, would I make use of an expression calculated to wound the feelings of anyone. But before I sit down, permit me to address a few words to those among your lordships, and I believe there are many, who go along with me in the arguments I have employed, and who regard with the same alarm as I do this measure, and yet who, for various reasons, are prepared to assent to the second reading. I can conceive various motives which may impel high-minded and honourable men to take such a course. I know there may be those who feel ready to yield to the authority of the House of Commons; I entertain great respect for the authority of that House, of which I was a member twenty-two years. But where on this subject am I to discover its authority, and how to collect its opinions? I can but discover them in its recorded votes. Am I to be bound by its votes of 1846, of 1844, or of 1842? When I find that a measure of 1842 was rejected by a majority of 213, and another measure to the same effect in the same year, rejected by a majority of 114; when I find it rejected by a majority of 256 in 1843, and again by a majority of 209 in 1844, and when I find a motion for the repeal of the corn laws rejected by a majority of 132 in June, 1845, and when I find that same measure not negatived by a majority of 132, but affirmed by a majority of 98 by the same men and in the same House, I say this sudden conversion must tend to diminish

the value I attach to the authority of the last vote of the House of Commons. I respect the judgment and decision of the House of Commons, but not because it is a decision of a majority of gentlemen more or less well educated and enlightened. I respect their decision because it is the decision of the representatives of public opinion in this country; and if I am to take the decision of the House of Commons, I must, if I am to be bound by either decision, take that decision of the collected representation in 1842, rather than that of the collected representation in 1846, of the deliberate judgment and opinion of the people of this country. There are those who disapprove of this decision, but who, from a personal feeling of attachment to the Government, are prepared to vote with them. I sympathise with that feeling, but I cannot assent in justice to their course. There are too great interests at stake in this question to be complimented away out of deference to any minister. Depend upon it, the public interests can never be benefited by the sacrifice of your own deliberate judgment, by turning round upon your own principles for the purpose of saving an Administration. My conviction is, that if you make the sacrifice it will be made in vain, for there never was a Government which permanently maintained office, much less power, when it rested on the somewhat contemptuous sufferance of its opponents, joined to the ill-concealed disgust, and the lukewarm and half-ashamed support of its adherents.

There may be those, my lords, who hope, by giving their consent to this measure, to put an end to agitation, and to give satisfaction to the members of the Anti-Corn-Law League. When, my lords, was an organised agitation put down by concessions extorted from its opponents? Depend upon it, that when this body shall have once tasted the cup of political power, the draught will be too sweet to induce them to relinquish it. I agree with my noble friend, that this is only one of the measures which one after another will be the object of the Anti-Corn-Law League Why, my lords, there is no secret made of it I do not say that every member of the Anti-Corn-Law League enters fully into those opinions; for I believe that there are many excellent men who have joined that body with none but commercial objects, who sincerely believe that free trade will be a benefit to the country and to

themselves, and who would withdraw if there were any attempt to carry those objects further But, recollect, that agitation having succeeded in one object is not a thing easy to put down. Here is the language used by one of the free traders at a meeting held in this city, at which Mr. Lawrence Heyworth was in the chair—'

"They were told of the wonders that resulted from public opinion, that it was performing something like miracles, converting prime ministers to right principles; but they must have something more than free trade in corn, fresh meat, and vegetables. The discussions which had taken place had enlightened the public, and they would begin to ask—Why continue a system of levying taxes by which the trade of the country is decreased and the comforts of the people lessened? Men would begin to ask whether it would not be better to have one tax—a tax on property—to carry on the government of the country. Whether it would not be better to abolish the Custom-house system, to do away with the preventive force altogether, and to put up a board on the sea-coast with these words, 'Honest traders of all nations may land their stuff here. No taxes. No duties.'" In further allusion to the great principles of free trade, he said "they had lived to see their triumph in the most extraordinary way, but he would not have the friends of free trade to relax in their endeavours. They must remember the House of Lords yet lived. It was still the stronghold of the aristocracy. They were struggling now for something more than the maintenance of the present commercial policy. They had a sure conviction that free trade would not only give the people more comfort but more independence, and this was the thing they feared. Commercial and trading liberty would promote intelligence and give an increased impulse to those great principles of civil and religious liberty on which this country was placing its affections. After the settlement of the free trade question, the people would then have more time to agitate for the great principle of universal suffrage. If it is good (said he) for commerce to be free, it is good for man to be free. Gradually human life was becoming of more importance—the very gallows was becoming odious. Everything which weakened the aristocracy and increased the intelligence of the people must be in favour of this noble and Christian principle."

And I beg the attention of the right reverend bench to this passage—

"Could they have free trade in commerce without free trade in religion; or could, under such a system, ecclesiastical despotism continue to blight our country? The time was not far distant when Catholics and Dissenters would ask, 'Why shall the Church of Christ continue to be bandaged by the trammels of the State? Why shall the ministers of the Gospel be compelled to wear the State's livery?' Freedom in religion, as displayed in the entire separation of Church and State, will be one of the glorious effects of free trade."

Lastly, my lords, there is another motive which is most likely to operate with high-minded men; it is an unworthy fear and suspicion that they are acting from interested or dishonourable motives. My lords, if I were speaking to an ordinary assembly, I might warn them of the danger of yielding to such motives; but, speaking to the assembly which I have the honour to address, I feel that I should rather warn you against a bias in the opposite direction, against assenting to a measure injurious both to the public and to your own interests, lest you should be unjustly suspected of interested motives. My lords, you have no right to yield to such considerations. You are the trustees for far more than your personal interests; you are the trustees for your country, you are the trustees for posterity, you are the trustees for the constitution of the empire. My lords, you, each and all of you, live amongst your neighbours, by whom you are looked up to as the guides for their political opinions; from you your neighbours take the colour of their opinions and their views; to you they look, to your opinion a respectful deference is paid, and it is you who have encouraged and promulgated the opinion that for the great interests of the country agricultural protection is essential. With what feeling, my lords, with what face, having voted for the destruction of all protection in agriculture, can you show yourself in the midst of those neighbours who have hitherto regarded you with respect, and whose principles and opinions you have heretofore influenced? They will charge you, and charge you justly, as you now charge the Government, with having misled and betrayed those who have placed their confidence in you. Therefore, my lords, if against your own deliberate opinions you consent to pass this measure be

prepared to abdicate the hitherto high place you have held in the Constitution; if you sacrifice your own opinions to the intimidation of faction, the allurements of power, or the dictation of any minister on earth, be prepared hereafter to be looked upon as a subordinate branch of the Constitution, to be looked upon only as the registrars of the edicts of the House of Commons, and as the pliant followers of the Minister of the day.

My lords, if I know anything of the constitutional value of this house, it is to interpose a salutary obstacle to rash and inconsiderate legislation; it is to protect the people from the consequences of their own imprudence. It never has been the course of this house to resist a continued and deliberately formed public opinion; your lordships always have bowed, and always will bow to the expression of such an opinion; but it is yours to check hasty legislation, leading to irreparable evils; and it is yours—though the Constitution can hardly have been deemed to have provided for such a contingency—to protect the people, not against their own hasty judgments, but against the treachery of those whom they have chosen to be their representatives.

My lords, if, acting on your own deliberate and impartial opinion, scorning the degrading suspicion of being actuated by unworthy motives, you follow the course which in your conscience you believe to be for the good of the country, you may fail in effecting your purpose, but you will not be contemned; overborne by numbers you may be, but not degraded. You may not succeed in averting the threatened evil, but you will secure the approbation of your friends and compel the respect of your opponents. And if, by the blessing of God, your decision on this great question shall arrest the progress of this hasty and inconsiderate measure; if you shall thus give time for the intelligence of the country to act upon the public mind; if, happily, you shall succeed in leading back the country to a wiser course, and in adopting the too much despised wisdom of your ancestors, then will you justly be a "proud aristocracy"; proud of having faithfully discharged the duty vested in you by the Constitution; proud of having withstood alike the seductions of power and the threats of popular clamour; proud of having succeeded in saving your country from this great delusion, this hazardous and fearful experiment. Your

best reward, my lords, will be the approval of your own consciences; but doubt not but that you will have a further reward in the approbation of a grateful and admiring nation, to which you will have given just cause to exclaim—Thank God, we have a House of Lords!

LORD BEACONSFIELD

DISRAELI'S reply to the attacks on his second or supplementary Budget of 1852 is one of his most effective and brilliant performances. It is also interesting as the commencement of the long duel between him and Mr. Gladstone, for Mr. Gladstone replied to it on the spot. As a specimen of sarcasm, invective, defence in the form of attack, and inimitably skilful turning of the tables upon his antagonists, it was never surpassed, if indeed it was ever equalled, in the whole of Disraeli's career. Disraeli had come into office for the first time with Lord Derby early in the year 1852, and the General Election in the summer, though unfavourable to the Government, had not been decisive. The struggle which determined the fate of the Ministry came on the financial arrangements left incomplete at the Dissolution, and this speech was the last Ministerial word.

REPLY IN DEFENCE OF HIS BUDGET
16th of December, 1852

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER:—Sir, after four nights of criticism, conducted by some of the most considerable reputations in this House, on the financial propositions that I have laid on the table of the Committee, I now rise to vindicate those propositions. If in the observations, which I will endeavour to condense as much as I can, I omit noticing any of the objections which have been urged against those propositions, I hope the Committee will ascribe that negligence to inadvertence and not to design. Having listened with the respect and attention naturally due to such words from such lips, I can conscientiously say that I have heard nothing that in my opinion has successfully impugned the policy which, as the organ of the Government, I have recommended; and I am prepared to meet the objections which have been urged, and to show to the Committee that they are unfounded and illusory. When with the great indulgence of the House on

Friday week, I attempted to make a general exposition of the financial policy of the Government; when, exhausting, I am conscious, the patience of the House, as well as myself, I endeavoured in the fulfilment of my duty to give—I will not call them estimates—but to give such information as was necessary as to the effect of the alterations that we proposed on the revenue of the next year and the year immediately following—I did not then attempt to substantiate that statement by details. I felt that at that moment the House was too exhausted to listen to those details; I felt that the general statement would undergo the scrutiny of persons competent to invalidate its accuracy if inaccuracy could be proved to exist; and I felt I should have the opportunity, with permission of the House, of answering such criticisms in due time. I will now, therefore, in the first place, address myself to the statement which I made generally as to the effect of these alterations on the revenue of the two years under discussion; and I will apply myself, in the first instance, to the two important arraignments of the policy which we recommend, made principally by the right honourable gentleman the Member for Halifax (Sir Charles Wood). And, first, I will address myself to that sum of £400,000, which, under the name of repayments, I recommend to the Committee to adopt and to sanction as part of the ways and means of the impending year. That proposed course was at once denounced by the Member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Gladstone), and afterwards assailed in language and a tone somewhat unusual—certainly not very Parliamentary—by the right honourable Member for Halifax; for instead of addressing his observations to you, Sir, he addressed, throughout his speech, his observations to myself. On a subsequent occasion another right honourable gentleman—a great authority in this House (Sir James Graham)—entered amply, and with the advantage which days of meditation on the subject gave him, into the same topic, enlarging upon it with a minuteness which was not observed in the attack of the Member for the University of Oxford, and which was scorned by the Member for Halifax.

These three great authorities have combined to influence the opinion of the Committee on the subject. I am not sure whether a third Ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer[1] has touched

[1] Mr. Goulburn, Chancellor of the Exchequer under Sir Robert Peel.

on it, for, unfortunately, I was absent from the House during part of the time he was addressing the Committee—probably, however, he did not spare me any more than his right honourable friends have done. It is for me now to show—if the Committee will, as I have no doubt, after these attacks, it will, give me its kind and patient attention—that the propositions I made bear a very different character and complexion from those which these authorities have so strenuously sought to induce the Committee to believe. There are two points in this subject before the Committee: first, was I justified in recommending that the establishment in question should be abolished? Secondly, if I was justified in that recommendation, was I justified in also recommending that the repayments should take their place in the ways and means. These are the two issues in this matter before the Committee; I trust I have stated them fairly. I must advert briefly to the origin of this department of the Public Works Loan Commission, to which, on the former occasion, I alluded cursorily. I observed then that this department had its origin in circumstances exactly the reverse of those under which it now exists, and that it was occasioned by causes which now no longer operate. At the peace, there being surplus population and deficient capital, the labour market throughout the country being suddenly disturbed, and unexpected bands let loose on society, the amount of unemployed labour being increased and aggravated by a body of 200,000 seamen and soldiers all at once disbanded, the Government of that day felt it necessary to take some artificial means of employing that surplus labour in a state of society where capital was deficient.

It is not necessary for us to enter into any discussion as to the policy or impolicy of such a proceeding. Probably mere political economists might not approve of it—probably statesmen under circumstances so urgent, though they might not have abstractedly approved of it, might have been forced to have recourse to such a measure. However this may be, a department was established which, by the credit of Exchequer Bills issued by the State, raised money, and employed that money in what is called "public works." That system went on for, I think, nearly fifteen years. Nearly £3,000,000 of Exchequer Bills had been issued, and those which had been so issued for that purpose were not of so favourite a character

in the market as the usual Supply Exchequer Bills, and it was found necessary or convenient to terminate the issue. In the year 1842, the point from which we depart, the account was taken of that fund. It appeared at that time that in round numbers the sum of £3,000,000 had been raised by Exchequer Bills thus issued; that of that sum £2,000,000 had been paid off, and that £1,046,000 remained at that time unsettled, if I may use the expression, and to close the transaction they were funded. From that period, by Act of Parliament it was arranged that, instead of loans raised on Exchequer Bills, the same Commissioners for the same purpose should receive a sum of money to the amount of £360,000 a year from the Consolidated Fund. The sum which we have actually to deal with is £300,000 per annum, for by a subsequent arrangement £60,000, a portion of that sum, was transferred to the use of Ireland only for public works, and with that we do not propose to deal.

Well now, Sir, the Member for Carlisle (Sir James Graham) has dilated in almost moving terms upon the benefit of the loan fund, especially to the country gentlemen. He has eulogised its good administration by the unpaid Commissioners, whose respectable and respected names he read to the Committee; nor should he have forgotten—though he omitted it, I am sure, only from inadvertence—to have recorded, also, the names of the respected officers connected with that fund, whose performance of their duties should not, I think, be overlooked at this moment, whatever our opinion may be upon other subjects. I am willing to admit that so far as those unpaid Commissioners and those sedulous officials are concerned, there are few blots in the administration of that fund, during a long period, by them. On the contrary, I think I may say that they have conducted themselves with unimpeachable assiduity and care. Sir, the right honourable gentleman passing on, has dilated upon the importance of this fund, especially to the country gentlemen. With this fund, according to him, bridges have been erected, union workhouses built, lunatic asylums and public gaols have risen.

SIR J. GRAHAM: I said "workhouses enlarged," not "built."

Well, enlarged; the right honourable gentleman may have the benefit of the correction. Certainly he talked of this fund circulating to the constant advantage of the landed interest,

and he asked, " If that assistance is withdrawn, what are they to do ? " " Why has he touched it ? " said the right honourable gentleman with indignation ; " not a single shilling has been lost ; why has he touched it ? "

Now, Sir, of funds of this nature there is one general observation to make, which before we enter into consideration of its particular management should not be omitted. This fund proposed to lend money at a higher rate of interest than the rate prevailing in what is called " the Money Market." According to the Member for Halifax, that was in order that the Money Market should not be disturbed. The rules of the Loan Fund were these : that for all undertakings in which profit was concerned, 5 per cent. was to be charged ; and for all undertakings in which profit was not concerned 4 per cent. only was to be charged. The first and natural consequence of any department lending money at a higher rate of interest than the natural rate of the Money Market is, that first-rate securities will not pay 5 per cent., or 4 per cent. if they can get their money at 3½ per cent. ; and if your funds are employed, the chance is that your security is second-rate. Well, Sir, I have here ample information as to the manner in which those funds were employed as regards the country gentlemen, but I have no wish to enter into any details to show that in many instances those advances need not or ought not to have been made. At this moment the country gentlemen are not applying for any great amount of that fund, for the reason which my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Walpole) adverted to the other evening—namely, that they cannot afford to pay so high a rate of interest for the loan which is afforded them. But, Sir, the objection to this department has nothing to do with the circumstances on the surface, to which the Member for Carlisle has adverted, and to which he has confined himself. The question is one of a much deeper character ; and now perhaps the Committee will permit me to inform them under what circumstances and by what reason my attention was drawn to this Loan Fund.

Sir, I found in revising the public accounts of the country a department, and a department of no great mark, with a very large balance of the public money unemployed, amounting, when it first attracted my attention—and, I believe, at this moment—to upwards of £380,000 lying perfectly idle. It is

no doubt a rule, which I should think no gentleman opposite will impugn, that large balances of the public money lying idle is a circumstance which ought not to be encouraged, and which ought to be inquired into. But I found that with that large amount of balance there was a law in existence that peremptorily every quarter of a year increased it by the sum of £90,000, less the amount paid to Ireland, and it became, therefore, my duty to inquire why so large a balance remained unproductive, what was the object of that balance, what had been effected by that fund, and what might be the consequences of its remaining in its present state? The right honourable baronet said in a manner which he did not in any way qualify—which, in fact, was almost the basis of his appeal, if not his argument—that not a single shilling had been lost; that under the innocent management of those respected names which he appealed to, and those worthy officials whose services I have presumed to notice, the simple country gentlemen have been benefited; that that recruiting fund had raised our gaols, and enlarged our unions, and, after thirty or forty years' experience, not a single shilling, mind you, has been lost. "Why does he touch it?" Now, I must inform the Committee that the right honourable gentleman, in the minute statement which he gave with respect to this department, omitted all the most important facts.

I doubt not, Sir, that if a fund had been entrusted only to respectable unpaid Commissioners of such habits of life as were referred to by the right honourable gentleman, devoted only to the worthy and laudable purposes which the right honourable gentleman described as the sole object of its investment—I doubt not that, though there might have been an occasional job unconsciously perpetrated, and an occasional bad security inadvertently taken, yet no very serious consequences would have accrued. But, Sir, with so convenient a fund at their disposal, there was another party to interfere beside the respectable Commissioners, and the fund has been employed for purposes very different from those of my honourable friends near me, the country gentlemen of England. With these large balances and funds another influence has interfered, very briefly alluded to by one of those right honourable gentlemen who have spoken on the subject. "We all know how convenient it may be to the Minister," said the right honourable gentleman (Sir C.

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Wood), " to have at a particular moment such a fund at his command " ; and I will show the Committee how convenient it has been to the Minister to have such a fund at his command, and I will show to the Committee what flagrant misappropriation there has been of the public funds of this country, and how vast an amount has been squandered away, virtually without the cognisance and consent of Parliament, and entirely by the machinery of this Public Works Loan Fund. Now, Sir, " it is excessively convenient," says the right honourable gentleman. There are moments when even I, with my brief experience of office, which seems so much envied—when, he says, even I may have experienced the conveniences of such a fund. Well, I don't know what I may come to ; but certainly during the short period I have had the honour of presiding over the Exchequer, I had not the slightest idea that I was to avail myself of such an opportunity. This, now, is the way my predecessors have availed themselves of such opportunities. I shall then put the question simply to the Committee, whether they think that such a department ought to be maintained for the reasons urged by the right honourable Member for Carlisle, or whether I have taken a judicious course in attempting to terminate its existence. That is what I shall leave to the decision of the Committee.

Now, Sir, let me explain how the Minister of the day—I make no charge on any Minister of any period : my observations are general—how the Minister of the day has availed himself of the public funds, virtually, as I shall show you, without the cognisance of Parliament, and how vast sums have been squandered without even the honourable Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume), I believe, being aware of it. Now, I take one among many illustrative instances. I take the instance of the Thames Tunnel. There was a body of ingenious men who resolved to make a tunnel under the Thames. Well, it was a great triumph of scientific enterprise, and much to the honour of the English character that such an undertaking should have been entered into without, of course, the slightest chance of ever getting the smallest interest for their money. It is only in England that such things are undertaken and such enterprises encouraged. However, there are moments when even the most enthusiastic in such enterprises begin to think that public assistance is required. Appeals are made to the Minister.

Those appeals are strengthened and supported by powerful Parliamentary influence. A Bill is brought into Parliament on a subject which interests nobody, and it allows the undertakers of that public enterprise, the members of a public company, to raise money. Who of the 650 members has his eye on a Bill of that kind? Probably not five men in the House, unless they are the directors of the company, are aware of it. That Bill contains a clause permitting the Lords of the Treasury to advance from the Public Works Loan Fund a sum by way of loan to carry out the projects of that company. The Bill is passed. Being passed, the promoters go to the Treasury—I am now speaking of the Thames Tunnel Company—they go to the Treasury. By virtue of that clause the Lords of the Treasury advance, by way of loan, through the machinery of Public Works Loan Fund, no less a sum than £250,000 to the Thames Tunnel Company, not a shilling of which has ever been repaid, or can ever be repaid, and on which, I believe, only ½ per cent. interest, received probably as an admission fee into the tunnel, has ever been paid.

Now, what I say with regard to the system is this. It is perfectly open to the House of Commons to do that which all assemblies and individuals have a right to do—to commit a great folly. If a minister comes forward and asks the House of Commons to vote £250,000 to make a tunnel under the Thames, if we assent to his proposal, we have at least the glory of voting £250,000 for that object, and though some may think that £250,000 might be employed for a more useful or elevating purpose, at least an opportunity is given of appealing to the reason of the House and dissenting from the measure. But under this system no one is in the least aware that £250,000 is advanced. It is lent. Yes, but how lent? It is a grant in the shape of a loan. Now, this is one of the cases by which £250,000 and its accumulated interest have been lost to the country. I will give one more instance of the operation of this Loan Fund, and it is one of recent interest. I am ashamed to say that I have been a Member of Parliament during the time in which this instance occurred, and I daresay a majority now in this House were. Its date is from 1847 to 1850, and it makes me blush even at this moment. Now, this case is well deserving the attention of the Committee, because there is no reason why almost this very night, or the next night, the same operation

may not be going on; there is not the least reason why under this machinery we may not every week be voting £100,000 of the public money without a single member being cognisant of it. The case which I will now call your attention to is that of Battersea Park. Now, Sir, I am far from saying that it may not be the duty of the Government to establish parks for the health and enjoyment of the community. I do not want to enter into that question now, though perhaps I may observe, in respect to the establishment of a park, that it may fairly be considered whether the inhabitants of the district should not at least contribute their quota, and in that case whether it may not be perfectly legitimate in a great metropolis like this, that the central authority should aid in a purpose which contributes to the ornament of the capital, and the health of the general population. It is perfectly legitimate for the minister to come forward and propose a vote of £150,000 or more if necessary, to make a park at Battersea, or anywhere else. The House, in such an event, has the question fairly before it, and may consider it in all its details, and if it sanction it, although the speculation may be improvident, and the object not worth the investment, yet no one can complain of the result.

Let me inform the Committee what occurred in the case of Battersea Park. A Bill was brought into Parliament, as usual, empowering certain individuals to buy land at Battersea and to make a park. A clause was put into the Bill—not compulsory, mind you, but permissive—to enable the Lords of the Treasury if they thought fit, to advance from the Public Works Loan Fund such a sum as they might think proper for the advancement of the object in question. The proprietors of Battersea Park, with that Bill which nobody had ever seen, and that clause——

SIR C. WOOD: "It was a public Bill."

—Yes, a public Bill, of course, but it does not follow that five persons in the House knew of its existence—they go to the Treasury and what occurs? They obtain an advance from the Treasury of £150,000. I don't ask who was the Chancellor of the Exchequer who sanctioned that allowance, notwithstanding the recent interruption. Of all the speculations that man engaged in, no speculation was so absurd as Battersea Park. The persons who undertook the enterprise were

ignorant of all the circumstances with which they had to deal. They purchased a great deal of land, and made arrangements by which twenty years must elapse, even if they were successful, before they receive any rents; and the margin reserved for the Government is so slight that, instead of repaying the principal, it will probably never defray the sum that is already due for accumulated interest; for, mind you, they are in theory paying 5 per cent. to the Public Works Loan Fund all this time. The interest is debited every half year, and the arrears now amount, I think, to £12,000. Now, Sir, I will not go into any other instances. I have done my duty in bringing these before the Committee.

I have here, in my hand, from the year 1824 till 1840, a catalogue of parallel instances, and the whole amount is very little short of £700,000, every shilling of which has been lost to the country. "Not a single shilling has been lost," said the right honourable gentleman (Sir J. Graham). "Why has he touched it?"[1] Well, I've given him now the "reason why," and I think the Committee will agree, whatever they may think of the further merits of the question, that in stopping a system so iniquitous, I was only doing my duty as a guardian of the public purse. Yet this is the system which, according to the right honourable gentleman, is so beneficially administered by Lord Overstone, by which loans are advanced to country gentlemen for building lunatic asylums at 4 per cent. In fact, irrespective of the flagrant circumstances which I have brought before the Committee, time had virtually done that for the Public Works Loan Fund which an indignant Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to have done long ago. A loan fund at 4 or 5 per cent. founded upon the assumption that there was a surplus labour and deficient capital, in an age when there was a deficiency of labour and a plethora of capital, really had come to its natural end; and that is the cause of those large balances which must necessarily be swollen each quarter by the increment from the Exchequer. They have, in fact, with the rapidly accumulating funds been led almost to force their loans upon Irish railways; but here the unpaid Commissioners come into play, and take care that the security

[1] (A reference to a speech of Sir J. Graham's on the advantages accruing from the recent measures of commercial legislation. The refrain of several sentences was "And they knew the reason why.")

shall be of the best description. And, therefore, that has happened within a very recent period which will, perhaps, astonish the House; but such is the effect of the present, and I believe the permanent, state of the money market, that an Irish railway company that had asked for the assistance of a very large sum have just announced that they will not accept the money granted by the Loan Fund, because they find, having a good security, they can obtain assistance in the ordinary way at a more reasonable rate.

Under these circumstances, I felt it my duty to bring before the attention of my colleagues the state of this department; and I called to their notice that not only was there this waste of public money, but there was no security that the waste would not indefinitely continue. That waste, too, has taken place during a period of years when you have not been able to screw up your courage to vote £150,000 for a National Gallery; and we came to the conclusion that it would be a good thing to relieve the Consolidated Fund of this annual charge, and stop the machinery by which such ruinous waste of the public money took place. Then the question arose, What were we to do with the repayments to this Fund which would every year come in when the issue was stopped, and which repayments I placed in my estimate at £400,000? The right honourable gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Goulburn) seemed to correct me as to the repayments being £360,000; but he confounded the amount of issue from the Consolidated Fund with the repayments in a way that, with his experience as Chancellor of the Exchequer, somewhat surprised me. The fact is that the annual amount issued from the Consolidated Fund is no measure of the amount of repayments. But the question arose, What were we to do with these repayments? Were we to pay this £400,000 into the balances of the Exchequer? That was the first question. It is, no doubt, of the utmost importance that the balances in the Exchequer should be high. That is a very great principle. But, after all, the balances in the Exchequer are nothing more than the balances of the nation with its bankers; and the same rule must apply to a nation with its banker as to a private individual with his banker. Whether you bank with Messrs. Drummond or with the Bank of England neither would allow you any interest on your balances. It is necessary,

therefore, for the nation, as for a private individual, to have a good, ample and sufficient balance; but it is inexpedient, it is unwise, to have an excessive balance, and the consequence has been that the highest authorities, those most favourable to retaining a sufficient balance in the Exchequer, have laid down what may be considered rules for the amount of such balance. There is a certain point which it is considered inexpedient that the balance in the Exchequer should surmount.

The state of your balances in the Exchequer is this: they have long ago arrived at that point; at present they exceed it, and have done so for some time. Ever since 1842, with the exception of one year of startling and unexpected vicissitudes, the balances in the Exchequer have been very high, and higher than recommended by the best authorities. The proof is that, with the exception of 1848, never, from the period I have mentioned, has there been any occasion to borrow money, to receive any accommodation from the Bank of England for the current expenses of the State—that is to say, at the end of every quarter, when the dividends were about to be paid there has always been in the Bank a balance sufficient to discharge the claims of the public creditor, and leave a sum ample enough for all the contingencies of the national expenditure. Since 1849—with one exception, when I think a sum of £400 or £500 was paid for deficiency bills, and that only from a technical mistake—the Government has never, in fact, been under the necessity of appealing to the Bank for advances. The Committee, then, will understand that if the £400,000 in question had been paid in to the balances of the Exchequer, it would, in the present state of affairs, have been just the same as locking up that sum in an iron chest; it would have been immovable and unprofitable.

I must ask the indulgence of the Committee while I enter into these details. Treasury finance is a subject with which the House is not very conversant, but I hope the House will not think me presumptuous in attempting to instruct them upon it. My own knowledge on the subject is, of course, recent. I was not born and bred a Chancellor of the Exchequer—I am one of the Parliamentary rabble; but I trust, after all the observations that have been made, I may be permitted to show that I have not neglected to render myself acquainted with these affairs. One thing, I think, is quite clear. It is

quite clear that the right honourable gentleman the Member for Halifax is not in favour of this £400,000 being paid in to the balances of the Exchequer, because I have shown you that when brought into the Exchequer it is unprofitable; but the right honourable gentleman says, "The proper thing to do with it is this—it ought to go to reduce the debt." And the right honourable gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge echoes that—and I am glad to hear that admission, because the Government think the same. £1,000,000 debt was created by Funding Loan Exchequer Bills in 1842, and therefore, say the right honourable baronet and the right honourable gentleman, you ought to reduce the debt, both therefore being against this sum being paid in to the balances of the Exchequer.

Now let us examine this question of the reduction of the debt. Upon this subject there is some misapprehension prevalent in this House. I have been asked myself, "What do you leave for the reduction of the debt? In your financial statement you have left nothing." Sir, the mode, method and means by which the Sinking Fund acts, and the public debt of the country is liquidated, do not depend on the will of the minister, or even upon a vote of the House of Commons; they are provided for by legislation. The law has prescribed the method by which you reduce the public debt of this country. There is, in fact, only one way of acting by the Sinking Fund, and the law has prescribed this—I beg the attention of the House, because this is a vital point of my argument—the law, I say, prescribes that every quarter of the financial year, an account shall be taken of our income and expenditure at the Treasury, and in case a surplus shall be ascertained to exist, one-fourth of that surplus shall be instantly devoted to the liquidation of the public debt by the agency of the Sinking Fund. It is not left to the discretion of the minister, or of a single House of Parliament; the law is inexorable and imperative. It is impossible to reduce the debt, unless you bring your resources into the ways and means. It is only by such a process that they can enter into the balance struck of income and expenditure, and that the surplus can be ascertained, and one-fourth of that surplus appropriated to the reduction of the debt. And now I will show you how we propose to act on the debt in the way in which we have recommended Parliament to deal with this £400,000 of repayments.

The House will assume, for the sake of argument, that the surplus for the coming year is an accurate estimate. Well, then, the account of income and expenditure is taken at the Treasury at the end of the first quarter of the financial year; and the surplus being £400,000, one-fourth of that is immediately devoted to the reduction of the debt by the action of the law. The same process takes place every three months—the same action takes place on the same surplus of £400,000, and thus at the end of the year the whole of the £400,000 is devoted to the reduction of this debt. And, therefore, in three years' time, all things remaining the same, and the repayments entering into the Treasury, the whole of that sum of funded Exchequer bills of £1,046,000 and the accumulated interest, will be liquidated, and the public debt reduced by that amount. There is no other way of acting on the public debt or reducing it; the course we propose to take is the only one that can be taken in the case; there is no alternative—the law has so decided it. By the course, then, we have recommended, we have in the first place put an end to a disastrous waste of public money. In the second place, we have relieved the Consolidated Fund from an annual payment of £300,000; and in the third place, we have laid the foundation of a reduction of the public debt at least to the amount of £1,000,000 funded, and all its accumulations. The question, I apprehend, assumes a very different character after this explanation. But this is only a narrative of the conduct of the Government. Let us see what great authorities have said on this subject. Hitherto, as I have put the case, the House may be of opinion that we have acted discreetly but unprecedentedly. After the criticisms I have been subjected to, let me inform the House what was the opinion on the subject of the highest authorities. In 1822 a Select Committee was appointed to inquire into the public accounts, and to recommend the means by which the keeping of those accounts might be improved; and to that Committee we are indebted, with scarcely any exception, for all the forms of public accounts that now prevail. What was the recommendation of the Committee of 1822 with regard to these advances and repayments? That Committee, formed of the most distinguished men, concentrated their attention upon this sole subject, specifically recommended that all advances and repayments should enter

into the account of income and expenditure; and for six years the advances and repayments so figure in the public accounts. It may be said that there was another Select Committee on Public Accounts in 1828, and that they took a different view. That would not invalidate the high authority of the Committee of 1822; it would not deprive us of the authority that the course we have taken is not unprecedented, because I have proved it was practised for six years. But let us inquire what was the opinion of the Committee of 1828. They certainly did recommend that it would be more convenient that advances and repayments should be kept in separate accounts from those of the income and expenditure. But I am informed by a distinguished member of the Committee, that that recommendation did not arise from any adoption of the opinions now maintained on this subject by the right honourable gentleman opposite; and they added this to their recommendation, that, whenever an issue was stopped and the account closed, then the general account was to be taken, and the repayments were to revert to their old position in the public accounts. So even the Committee of 1828 sanctioned the principle recommended by the Committee of 1822, so far as payments and receipts were concerned. But in 1829, a law was passed which deprived ministers of any discretion on this head; and the only way the Act of 10 George IV, c. 12, operates on the reduction of the debt—the only way a minister can act in the reduction of the debt—is by bringing in, according to the recommendation of the Select Committee of 1822, the repayments under accounts closed to ways and means. It is painful to have to refer to these comparatively small matters, when matters of so much greater importance are before the Committee; but I hope that every member will admit that, after the speeches we have heard, it is due to the Government, to the party I have the honour to represent, and to the House, that I should go into these details, and state clearly the circumstances before us, and vindicate, as I hope I have done, the course which we recommend.

Well, Sir, I now approach the second grand arraignment of my financial statement, by the right honourable gentleman the Member for Halifax (Sir Charles Wood)—that is, the alleged mistake made in the estimates for the year after next, as to the loss which will accrue to the revenue from the proposed

semi-repeal of the malt duty. The House will recollect that I estimated the loss which would accrue in the year 1854-55 from the alteration in the malt duty at £1,700,000. Assuming that the amount of duty remitted would be about £2,500,000, and taking, of course, the most depreciatory view of the result of the reduction of duty, the Member for Halifax placed the amount derived from increased consumption as low as £200,000, and he added, " With £200,000 obtained by the repeal of your Scotch drawback, the total loss will be £2,100,000."

SIR CHARLES WOOD : I gave you credit for £400,000.

That is what I have just stated. He said I took the increased consumption at £800,000, which he described as preposterous —and altogether fictitious. Let us, however, Sir, examine the facts ; let us see what they are. When I brought under the consideration of the Committee the subject of the repeal of the malt tax, I said that the Government had followed in their treatment of that tax the recommendation of the Royal Commission of Excise Inquiry, presided over by Sir Henry Parnell, in 1832. The recommendation of that Committee was, that in case there was ever free trade in barley, one-half the malt tax should be repealed, and that the Scotch and Irish drawbacks should be terminated. In the interval since that Commission sat the Irish have voluntarily renounced their drawback. The Commissioners further recommended that, when free trade in barley was established, and the malt tax was reduced to one-half, an end should be put to the enormous system of credit given to maltsters. I said that, although we wished to follow the recommendation of those eminent men, the members of the Excise Commission, as nearly as possible, we thought it important, in regard to the recommendation as to the reduction of the credit given to the maltsters, that the trade should not be disturbed, although we felt that the whole system was vicious in principle and pernicious in practice, and that it was necessary to make some considerable change. That subject has been under our consideration. Our object has been to put an end to, or to modify, a system which grew out of circumstances totally different from those of the age in which we live, and, while we placed the conduct of the trade upon a more healthy and satisfactory basis, not to disturb the trade. But the effect of the new arrangement we propose as to this credit, though, in our opinion, it will not in any way disturb the trade,

will have an immediate influence upon the revenue. In the year 1854-55 there will be a sum of £600,000 paid to the revenue, which, if this system of credit were not reformed, would not be obtained. Now, what did I do under these circumstances? Assuming that the numerical loss from the semi-repeal of the malt tax would be £2,500,000, I deducted from that amount the sum just stated, as regards the year 1854-55. That reduced the numerical loss to £1,900,000. Then the sum of £200,000 obtained by the repeal of the Scotch drawback would further reduce it to £1,700,000. As I was not making a formal estimate to the House, and dealing with a time so remote, I would not make any allowance for that increased consumption which was admitted by the right honourable gentleman. If I had made an allowance for the increased consumption, according to his estimate, the loss for the year 1854-55, instead of £1,700,000, would have been only £1,500,000; but if I had made an allowance according to the estimate which was given me by the highest authorities in the trade it would have reached a much lower sum. But as I have never offered any estimate, since I have had the honour of addressing this House, which has not, I hope, been prudent and moderate, I refrained altogether from taking the influence of increased consumption into calculation; otherwise I might have fairly described the estimated surplus of 1854-55 at £800,000 instead of £400,000.

The Member for the University of Cambridge next advanced, and he disputed the accuracy of my estimate of the amount of drawback payable in October to the maltsters. He wanted to know on what data that estimate was framed. Well, Sir, I will tell him. After all, there is only one way of carrying on the public business. When a question of this kind arises, we must obtain the best information that we can get from the most authentic quarters, and must exercise our own judgment upon the facts which are placed before us. Well, Sir, the highest authorities—men whose information upon this subject is unequalled, and whose intelligence and integrity of character are indisputable—these, the highest authorities, united in recommending me to take one-third of the stock as the amount upon which I should have to pay drawback on the 10th of October; that is, one-sixth of the duty—and the sum I was recommended to take, as a very safe estimate of the amount of drawback calculated by those who are perfectly acquainted

with the trade, was £880,000. Well, according to my habit, I estimated the amount of drawback at £1,000,000, and these are the numerals which have excited the indignant rhetoric of the Member for the University.

"But why fix the 10th of October?" said the honourable and learned Member for Kidderminster (Mr. Lowe). "Here is a plot," said the honourable gentleman; "if we can only find out why the Government fix upon the 10th of October, we shall be able at once to penetrate these financial mystifications." That honourable gentleman is an accession to our debates—he has shown, on the rare occasions when he has addressed the House, considerable information; but there is, certainly, one subject on which his knowledge has been most conspicuous, and that is—brewing. I am surprised that an honourable gentleman who seemed so complete a master of that art, and who made so eloquent a defence of the system of credit to maltsters, should, of all men, be the person to ask why we fixed upon the 10th of October for bringing into operation the half-repeal of the malt tax. Now I had calculated that if I should be as successful with regard to my resolutions as I could possibly expect to be, it was not probable that the resolution upon the malt tax would pass before March; but the policy which I announced and recommended in December would, if I had not proposed a drawback, have completely paralysed the trade. Every maltster in the country would have stopped his operations. It was necessary I should announce that the Government would allow a drawback on stock-in-hand, and the consequence is that the trade goes on just as usual. The honourable gentleman who possessed such remarkable information on the subject of brewing and malting ought to know that by far the greater amount of duty which is charged, and upon which the usual credit is given for 1853-54, is charged between the months of October and April. Malting virtually ceases at the end of May. From May to October malting does not go on, but there is something that does go on, and that is brewing. The brewer acts upon the stock of the maltster; and therefore when you have to pay the drawback, you pay it under the most advantageous circumstances in paying it at the period when the stock-in-hand is most reduced, and when the malting season again commences. In fixing the 10th of October, then, I fix a date recommended by

those best acquainted with the subject with which I was dealing. That is my answer to the inquiry of the honourable gentleman.

Sir, I do not like to advert to a subject to which I have already referred; but I have just remembered that the honourable Member for Kidderminster said that he should look to me in my reply to notice the instance of the mortgage, which he adduced as a parallel more apposite than his own. I will suppose the case of a careful father of a family, who every three months takes account of his expenditure and income, and devotes one-fourth of his surplus to the payment of his debts, a portion of those debts being incurred by advances to his son, but the son, when he makes the repayments for these advances, makes them into the hands of a banker, by whom no interest is given, so the father, instead of allowing the money to lie idly there, takes it into his general account, and when he strikes his quarterly balance applies the repayments as part of his surplus to the reduction of his debts. That is my answer to the case of the honourable gentleman, and I humbly deem my instance an exacter parallel than his own. Then there is another subject upon which the honourable and learned Member for Kidderminster is a great authority, and that not only here, but I suspect elsewhere. According to the honourable gentleman, the Kaffir war has broken out again. Now, I made a statement to the House a fortnight ago respecting the prospects of extraordinary expenditure with regard to the Kaffir war. I formed my opinion on the Kaffir war—with great deference to the despatches which are received by my right honourable friend the Secretary of State—from the despatches which are forwarded to my own department from a branch of the service under my immediate supervision—I mean the commissariat department, a branch of the service which deals entirely with the extraordinary expenditure under the control of the Treasury. Whatever the result may be, it is my duty to express my belief that the public funds were never more ably administered than by those who have regulated the extraordinary expenditure of the Kaffir war in the commissariat department. That department communicates directly with the Treasury, and, although these despatches naturally confine themselves mainly to the question of expenditure, there is a great deal of valuable information conveyed in them to the Government in a less formal manner than in the

despatches received in other quarters. Well, upon the information which I have thus received, which has never yet deceived me, which has justified me, at the commencement of the year, in not calling upon the House to confirm their vote of £200,000, I made the statement the other night, that I believed the Kaffir war was terminated. We have had more recent information; and I can truly say that all the information that has reached me has entirely substantiated the statement I made upon the previous authority. I have no hesitation in saying, the Kaffir war is terminated. The best evidence I have is, that the commissariat department, who are dealing with the extraordinary expenditure, the only one that figures in our estimate, are winding up their extraordinary accounts; and they have announced to me that, except for some casualties which are always liable to occur in any account, they will not trouble me for any further advances. They also give incidental details of the state of the country, which convince me that the war is finished.

In a war with a savage country you cannot have peace suddenly and precisely ascertained, as you may with a nation with which you can enter into a treaty, or where you can take the capital, or where some incident occurs which convinces all the inhabitants that the struggle is over. A sort of flickering ember there may be, and to the last an officer may be shot, or some straggling assassination may occur; but that the Kaffirs can now bring any force into the field, I believe the Committee may be satisfied is impossible. It is not that several chiefs have surrendered—these things have happened before; it is not that the Waterkloof is cleared—though that is important; but it is that in the bush, in the Amatolas, skeletons of the Kaffirs are found; it is clear they have no means of subsistence: they are lingering in the bush and dying. The same ship that brought me the information on which I formed my opinion, of course brought despatches to the Secretary of State, and here is a despatch of General Cathcart. I will read a paragraph from it, if the Committee wish: it is strictly in keeping with the subject; we are vindicating the estimates, and I rather think I ought to do so. It is dated from Graham's Town, the 12th of October, 1852—

By this report, and other events which are detailed in my despatch respecting British Kaffraria, you will perceive that the war, or rebellion,

may now be considered at an end ; and as it has been attained, not by any compromise or treaty, but by force of arms, and a severe moral lesson, by the dispersion and expulsion of the most powerful tribe from the natural strongholds which they long believed to be impregnable, cannot fail to impress upon those who are conscious of their inferiority in respect to these natural advantages, the ultimate ruin and destruction that must be the result of rebellious opposition to Her Majesty's authority ; and there is reason to hope, provided that authority be duly supported by an adequate permanent military establishment, that any similar protracted and expensive Kaffrarian war may be long averted.

I read that because it is a definite announcement. With regard to the "adequate military establishment," the right honourable baronet need not be alarmed ; it will be very moderate ; we shall depend upon the mounted police, which is a colonial force, paid for, of course, by the colony—a colony with a free constitution. Colonies with constitutions will, I apprehend, always be ready to defray the expense of self-defence. The head-quarters of General Cathcart are now at Graham's Town. He has withdrawn two regiments from the seat of war, and I trust we shall soon be able to withdraw others.

Sir, there is another point in the estimate which I ought to notice, which has been urged by the right honourable gentleman the Member for Cambridge University (Mr. Goulburn). He said I had made no allowance for the loss to the revenue from the proposed permission for refining sugar in bond. It is very inconvenient for me, at this moment, to refer in any detail to the subject of refining in bond. The refining in bond will depend upon certain conditions. I have pledged myself that those conditions shall be shortly placed before those most interested, and I think it improper that they shall be previously bruited about. I can only say, therefore, at present, that I do not make any allowance for a loss on refining in bond, because I believe not the slightest loss to the revenue will occur. I hope the right honourable gentleman will at present be satisfied with my giving my opinion, and not press me to go into any detail upon this point.

Sir, I approach more serious subjects. It has been said that the house tax has been proposed by the Government in order to enable them to carry the semi-repeal of the malt tax. Well, I admit that this is a very plausible charge ; it is a good party charge. It is very possible that, were I in their

situation, I should have made the charge myself. Nevertheless, though it be a plausible charge, a good party charge, it is not a just charge.

These measures have no connection whatever in the policy we have thought it our duty to recommend. Sir, the right honourable gentleman opposite informed the House on Tuesday night that I promised the country a new system of taxation; but he did not produce any authority for that statement, and when statements of such magnitude are made, authorities should be furnished. I will sit down now, if the right honourable gentleman will rise and give me the authority. It is very true that the lively Member for Middlesex (Mr. Osborne) quoted a passage from an address to my constituents, which certainly was not merely made to my constituents in Buckinghamshire, but to those in other places whom my feeble authority might influence; but if an opponent could have wished to assist the man whose adversary he was, he could not have done me more justice or given me a better turn than the Member for Middlesex has done in quoting the passage in question. I listened to his speech with all that pleasure which I am sure the House shared. I think it was one of his best speeches: but the passage that most gratified me was that which he quoted from my own address, for I had not seen that address for a long time, and really, after some of these charges which have been lately made, I had arrived at almost a nervous state as to its contents. What did I say there? I, who am charged with misleading the farmers at the election, and throwing them over afterwards—I said that the genius of the age was in favour of free exchange, and that it was in vain to struggle against it; that they must find the means of meeting it by reducing the cost of production, and that one of the means of reducing the cost of production was a revision of taxation. I think more sensible advice, expressed in more moderate language, could not have been given; yet I am described as having deceived the farmers before the election, and thrown them over afterwards.

Sir, the right honourable gentleman says we are assembled here to receive the new system of taxation which I promised. Where is his authority? Her Majesty's Government have fulfilled all that they promised; they did not promise a new system of taxation, but they did promise a revision of the

taxation of the country. The Committee will, I hope, excuse my dwelling on this point. We did think it necessary to revise our system of taxation. We gave to the subject a long, an anxious and an impartial consideration. In reviewing that which I may truly call a colossal subject, the question naturally divided itself into several groups—if I may use a word now familiar to us. We had to consider those articles that enter into the general consumption of the people, that are necessary for their healthy sustenance, and that are exposed to enormous imposts, such as tea and malt. That was one subject on which we felt that it was necessary something should be done to meet the principles of unrestricted competition, now permanently established as the principle of our commercial code. We wished in this respect more nearly to assimilate our financial with our commercial system. We had to consider the whole question of the stamp duties with reference to those real burdens upon land—upon the transfer of land—which must sooner or later be dealt with; and a question of the utmost difficulty which must also not long be neglected—the question of the legacy and probate duties. We had to consider whether it was possible to propose to Parliament a duty on succession which, in connection with the total reform of the burdens on the transfer of land, would be an equitable and just settlement of the question, and one which was for the welfare of all classes. That is what I may call the second group. We had, in the third place, to consider those Excise Laws which exercise a pernicious influence upon the employment of capital, and upon the employment of labour, like the soap and paper duties.

The question of the assessed taxes, with the necessary reforms which they require, alone form a fourth group. We were obliged to consider the whole of our tariff with regard to our commercial relations with other countries because there was an inclination in some countries to increase these commercial relations, and we wished to encourage them. These were five great subjects, all of them demanding our attention, with all of which, sooner or later, a Government must deal; and we had to choose how we would commence this arduous enterprise. But there was a very important question also to consider when we took a general survey of our financial system; a very important question to settle before we could decide even as to the first step we should take; and that was how far we

could prevail upon the country to consent to that amount of direct taxation which was necessary for any ministry that should attempt to enter into a career of financial reform. Sir, I have been accused by the Member for Halifax (Sir C. Wood) of making a proposition which recklessly increases the direct taxation of the country. I have been accused by the Member for Carlisle (Sir James Graham), prompt in accusation at all times, of pushing direct taxation to a rash extreme. In the first place, the proposition I made on the part of the Government, instead of recklessly increasing the amount of direct taxation, would not, if it passed, occasion so great an amount of direct taxation as prevailed under the superintendence of the finances by the right honourable gentleman the Member for Halifax himself, when he enjoyed, not only the income and property tax, but the window tax, which, in the last year of its existence, brought him nearly £2,000,000 sterling. The right honourable gentleman, who says you must not recklessly increase the amount of direct taxation, and charges me with doing so, when in 1850 he commuted the window tax for a house tax, first proposed, though fruitlessly, a commutation which would have established a higher house tax than that which we now recommend coupled by us with great remissions of indirect imposts.

But is this all? Is this all that has been done by the right honourable gentleman who charges me with proposing recklessly to increase the direct taxation of the country? Why, he seems to forget that he is the minister who with the property and income tax you have now producing its full amount, with a window tax that brought nearly £2,000,000, came down to the House of Commons one day and proposed to a startled assembly to double nearly that property and income tax. Recklessness! Why, Sir, if recklessness be carelessness of consequences; if it be the conduct of a man who has not well weighed the enterprise in which he is embarked, what are we to esteem this behaviour of the right honourable gentleman? We hear much of the duplication of the house tax—an immense amount; but if the right honourable gentleman had carried the duplication of the property and income tax, I think he might fairly have been charged with recklessly increasing the direct taxation of the country. The most curious thing, however, is that the minister who came forward to make a

proposition which nothing but the most grave conjuncture of circumstances might have justified, at the first menace of opposition withdrew his proposition. Talk of recklessness! Why, what in the history of finance is equal to the recklessness of the right honourable gentleman? And what was the ground on which he withdrew this enormous proposition—a proposition which only the safety of the State would have justified him in making. When he was beaten, baffled, humiliated, he came down to the House of Commons and said that he had sufficient revenue without resorting to that proposition. The future historian will not be believed when he states that a minister came down with a proposition nearly to double the income tax, and when the proposition was rejected, the next day announced that the ways and means were ample without it. But then the right honourable gentleman tells me—in not very polished, and scarcely in Parliamentary language—that I do not know my business. He may have learned his business. The House of Commons is the best judge of that; I care not to be his critic. Yet, if he has learned his business, he has still to learn that petulance is not sarcasm, and that insolence is not invective.

The Committee will permit me to remind them in dealing with those five great groups of taxation to which I have called their attention, and all of which I may say equally demanded the consideration of a minister, we had to deal with the great subject of direct taxation. There was, indeed, the income and property tax in existence for a brief space. It was, perhaps, possible that the ministry might have come forward in the House of Commons and obtained a temporary continuance of that impost. That was not, however, by any means certain. But there were, Sir, peculiar circumstances connected with the position of the ministers with respect to the property and income tax. Her Majesty's Government were of opinion that the time could no longer be delayed when the Government of this country must recognise a difference between the incomes which accrued from precarious and incomes which accrued from realised property. It was evident that such an acknowledgment acted upon must diminish the produce from that tax at a moment when certainly we did not wish our resources from direct taxation to be diminished. It is difficult to answer every observation that has been made in the course of this

debate ; but another right honourable gentleman who recently spoke has been criticising—I think, before the appropriate time—what he calls my Bill with respect to the property and income tax. In the first place, my Bill is not before the House. When he sees it he may criticise it. Nobody who has had to prepare a property and income tax can be ignorant that there are some anomalies in Schedule D. The anomalies, however, are not confined merely to that schedule. To frame a complete measure on this subject would baffle the happiest genius in finance. There are, no doubt, alterations which may be made in the arrangement of that schedule ; it will be open to any member to propose such. But if they be made they will not affect, at least not materially, the financial result which I placed before the Committee. In laying the resolutions on the property and income tax on the table, we did not propose to deal with them before Christmas. We placed them on the table that the principle of the whole of our financial measures should be before members.

The resolutions express the principles we wish to assert. That is all we attempted at this moment. There may be, there unquestionably are, minor modifications of the schedules possible ; but between the general statement of our policy and laying the resolutions on the table there was no time to consider these less important points, nor, had there been time, would it have been opportune to do so. We reserved their consideration until the occasion of calling the attention of the House to the general question of the renewal of the tax. We had, then, to consider the great question of direct taxation. It was totally impossible—with whatever group we commenced —that we could embark on a career of financial reform really efficient, unless we had a certain amount of direct taxation, still including the income tax, to which we could trust. What is the rule we laid down ? Instead of being reckless, or, in the language of the right honourable gentleman the Member for Carlisle, ready to push direct taxation to a rash extreme, we resolved that the sum of direct taxation on which we should rest should be in amount of revenue inferior to that which had recently prevailed in this country, and which, since the repeal of the Corn Laws, has been cheerfully assented to by the people. Well, we had then to lay down two principles in dealing with direct taxation. We had to assert as regarded

the property and income tax, a difference between incomes of a precarious and incomes of a fixed character. We had next to vindicate a principle which we believed, and do believe, is a just one, and which, if not now, must ultimately be recognised and adopted—namely, that the basis of direct taxation should be enlarged. Having these two principles to guide us in devising means by which we were to obtain the amount of direct taxation necessary for our purpose, we believe that we have applied them moderately, temperately, scientifically and wisely, in the measures before the House. We believe that the difference which we recognise between realised and precarious incomes is one which certainly does not err on the side of excess; but that the recognition of that difference is also one which will justly gratify the working millions of this country, and that in asking them to contribute to the revenue of the country by extending and increasing the house tax, we are taking a course which, in its operation and ultimate results, will be greatly for their interests.

The question of the suffrage has been introduced into this debate. The policy of mixing up the franchise with taxation is, in my opinion, very questionable; but I say to those gentlemen on the other side of the House who have sought to introduce this question of the suffrage, that, if it is to be a permanent feature of our social system that there shall be a particular class invested with political power, which shall exercise that power to throw an undue weight of direct taxation upon the wealthier portion of the community, and an undue weight of indirect taxation on the working classes, I cannot imagine a circumstance more fatal to this country, or one more pregnant of disastrous consequences. But of this I feel convinced, that those who will first experience the disastrous consequences will be the privileged class itself. There was one other observation by the Member for Carlisle which I feel I ought to notice. That right honourable gentleman—whom I will not say I greatly respect, but rather whom I greatly regard—particularly dilated on the hard case of that class whose incomes amount to between £100 and £150 a year; those whom he considered to form the most straightened class, perhaps, in the country, and who bore most of the brunt of indirect taxation. That argument, or that assertion rather, has been followed up this evening by the honourable and learned

gentleman the Member for Southampton (Sir A. Cockburn). Now, that subject has been investigated by men who have devoted their lives to the study of these questions, and whose opinions are superior to all party contentions. It has recently been investigated by a gentleman who is what is called a Liberal, and who, if he were a member of this House, would sit opposite to me—I mean Mr. Greg, one of the most able inquirers into these subjects of the present day; and it is his opinion—and I believe that if any position has been more completely established than another as regards the incidence of taxation, it is this—that there is no class upon whom that incidence falls more lightly than upon those who possess incomes from £100 to £150 a year. It is that class who possess property of £300 or £400 a year who bear the brunt of indirect taxation. That can be shown in the most complete and satisfactory manner. But we had, on Tuesday night, a doleful and piteous appeal made to the House upon the hardship of taxing "poor clerks" with incomes of between £100 and £150 a year. The right honourable gentleman stated that £150 a year was exactly that point in the scale where manual labour ends and professional skill begins. You can recall the effective manner in which the right honourable gentleman stated that. He showed himself an unrivalled artist when he told us that this was the point where the fustian jacket ceased and broadcloth began.

Few can comprehend the labour of research and thought necessary to determine the just incidence of taxation. I am sure that there has been nothing ever written on the subject of which I have not attempted to avail myself. My researches have not been meagre. I hope I am superior to quoting Hansard "and all that"—but I may state, that among the documents, public and official—the records of the great ministers who have preceded my humble effort—which I read to guide me, I found one which greatly influenced me. I found the Superannuation Bill of 1834, which was drawn up and introduced by the right honourable gentleman the Member for Carlisle, being one of those laudable efforts which the right honourable gentleman has made to improve the administration of the country. Well, this was its principle: I found in that Bill that the line was drawn at £100 per annum; that the "poor clerk" under that sum only pays 2½ per cent., while

the " poor clerk " above that sum, though he may have only £110 a year, pays 5 per cent. That was one of the reckless legislative labours of the right honourable gentleman the Member for Carlisle. I know my deficiencies as well as any man in this House—probably better. But, after all, what, I ask, is to guide us? I am perfectly willing not to lay too much stress on the *epea pteroenta*—uttered in the heat of debate, but when I refer to public records, and when I look at a statute of the realm, then I have a right to suppose that I encounter the calm, soild and solemn conclusions of a statesman. Though I would not quote a passage of a speech as absolute authority for legislation, yet if I find a principle embalmed in a statute, I feel that, although time may have elapsed, and though opinions may have changed upon other matters, this is the better mind of the man, and being the better mind of a most able man, I confess the reading of that statute did influence me in that arrangement I have proposed, with regard to the income tax, respecting the " poor clerks " which the right honourable gentleman has so severely criticised. And remember what has happened to the " poor clerks " since 1834, when this statute was drawn; remember all the reductions of taxation which have been effected since that time, and of which the poor clerk has had the benefit. Remember the repeal of the Corn Laws. Look at the position of the " poor clerk " with £110 a year, who has a double superannuation tax placed upon him by the right honourable gentleman; and look at his position now. I say, without hesitation, that I do not believe, that the condition of any class has since that time been so much improved as that of the clerks whose salaries range between £100 and £150 a year.

Well, having decided that it was necessary, before we undertook the great labour which we felt it our duty to embark in, that we should have a certain amount of direct taxation to rest upon; having determined that we should make this difference in the assessment in the schedules between realised and precarious incomes, which must inevitably reduce the amount of direct taxation from that source which our predecessors enjoyed; having believed that we had attempted to supply the necessary amount by our proposition with respect to the house tax in a manner which was reasonable; which was just; which was on the whole most beneficial to the

community; which in its operation would ultimately tend to confer advantages on those on whom the tax was to be imposed; having by this measure, if successful, succeeded in obtaining the amount of direct taxation which was necessary, but which was still inferior in amount to that which only a few years ago had been enjoyed by our predecessors, we had to decide upon which of the five groups of taxation we should operate. Recognising—I am obliged to repeat it—recognising the great and permanent revolution which has occurred in the commercial system of this country; recognising, as we have done, unrestricted competition as the principle on which our commercial policy is henceforth to be based; and wishing to assimilate our financial to our commercial system, and assuming that we had obtained this amount of direct taxation to rest upon, we ultimately decided that it would be the wisest course to commence by acting upon those articles which entered most into the consumption of the people, and that it would be for their salutory advantage if we selected those articles which were subjected to the largest impost. Now that is the real history of the connection between the imposition of direct, and the remission of indirect taxes, as they appear in the propositions before us. Under these circumstances we were induced to recommend to the House the proposition which we have made with respect to the tea and malt duties.

Sir, at this late hour, I will endeavour to be as succinct as possible, and will not, therefore, go into the question of the reduction of the tea duties. I think the House and the country have recognised the wisdom of the course we have recommended. Neither at this late hour will I enter into an elaborate argument on the subject of the effect which will be produced by the modification of the malt tax. I am told that if you reduce the tax on the consumer, and only as a tax on the consumer—and to that point I shall advert presently, as being in perfect harmony with the principles laid down in our revision of the taxation—on one article to the extent of £2,500,000 sterling, we shall not in any way affect price, and that all the reductions will go to the brewer. Sir, I remember when we used to discuss the effect of taxation on another article, that similar observations were made. I do not care now to remember from what quarter they emanated, but the effect and object of these observations were exactly

the same. Then it was, "Oh, those villains, the bakers!" just as now it is to be, "Oh, those villains, the brewers!" You might reduce the price of corn; you might injure the agricultural interest; you might ruin the farmers and the country gentlemen, but you could not reduce the price of the loaf to the consumer. No, the bakers took it all. Yes, and there were the millers too. The millers were the worst of all; they carried off all the reduction. Well, those arguments had a considerable effect, and there was such a prejudice raised against the bakers throughout the country that I should not have been surprised if they had all been hanged in one day, as the bakers had once been in Constantinople. At that time it used to be shown that a fall of 10s. a quarter on wheat would not affect the price of bread, and we were told that the bakers then, like the brewers now, were a great monopoly—if not great capitalists—they were a kind of Freemasons, and, do what you would, it would be totally impossible in any way ever to get a cheap loaf. And now, such are the vicissitudes of public life—now we hear the same argument from those gentlemen who used to dilate so eloquently on the necessity of buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market. The great friends of the consumer; the enemies of colossal monopolies; here we find them all arrayed in favour of high taxation for the producer, and here we find them, with taunts to us, teaching all the fallacies which we at least have had the courage to give up. Tell me protection is dead! Tell me there is no protectionist party in the country! Why, 'tis rampant, and 'tis there! They have taken up our principles with our benches, and I believe they will be quite as unsuccessful.

I must here make one observation. I say it is in the interest of the consumer, in complete accordance with the principles we laid down in revising the taxation of the country, that we have proposed this measure; but I do not say it will not be for the interest of the cultivator of the soil, any more than I think that by remitting the duty on tea we have not done that which will greatly promote the welfare of our Indian commerce and our China trade. But we do not bring forward those propositions in that sense; for the advantage of the mercantile interest of India, or for the benefit of our trade with China. Let the farmers—or even those odious beings, the owners of the soil—have the benefits of this legislation just the same as

you admit the manufacturer of Manchester or the merchant of Liverpool to find in his transactions the advantage of reducing the price of bread or the price of tea. What we say is this: Deal with the interest of the consumer, and incidentally you will find that you are producing the greatest advantage to the great productive interests of the country. But, Sir, I am told that in repealing a portion of the malt tax—notwithstanding that I showed you in my statement how modestly I have put the resources of the country—I have shaken to its foundation the credit of England. The credit of England depends on a farthing a pot on the poor man's beer! Never shall I forget how that "weird Sibyl," the Member for Cambridge University, gave forth that solemn oracle—"The public credit of England is in danger."

I doubt whether such mere personal imputations and wide assertions are quite justifiable. He says the public credit is in danger. Well, I don't think it is. I think public credit never was in a better position; I never remember any period in the history of this country when her resources were, I may say, daily so visibly increasing. I will not now, Sir, enter into any discussion as to the cause of that prosperity—whether it be due to the influx of gold, the repeal of the Corn Laws, to emigration, or to anything else: though, Sir, as to emigration, there was one point in the speech of the honourable Member for Kidderminster to which I ought to make, perhaps, some reference. I hold the opinion of the honourable Member for Kidderminster to be quite as heretical on emigration as it is upon brewing and upon malt. I repeat that I am very glad to find him here among us; but all the opinions I have heard from him yet appear to be anything but sound. I continue in that opinion. In the first place the honourable gentleman confounded Ireland and England; though, I, at considerable pains, and perhaps not necessarily, showed the distinction between them the other night. As to England, it will be interesting to honourable members to be made acquainted with a passage from a letter written by an eminent actuary and perhaps our ablest statistical inquirer. His name is well known to the honourable Member for Montrose, for he gave important evidence before the Committee on the income tax. "The rate," he says, "of births and marriages has greatly increased in this country, and I think emigration may facilitate

the rate rather than impede it. The reserve of producing power which we have in this country"—that is a point I wish to bring to the attention of the honourable Member for Kidderminster. He has lived abroad in a country with a sparse population, and he has no idea of the reserve of producing power we have here. But he goes on: "The reserve of producing power which we have in this country you may infer from the fact that in the south-eastern counties to 100 married women of ages between twenty and forty-five there are seventy women of the same age—that is from twenty to forty-five—unmarried, of whom only about seven bear children notwithstanding."

Now, I have confidence in the reserve of producing power, which I think the honourable member, with his colonial experience, had not given sufficient credit to us for. Now, Sir, our opinion is, that under the arrangements which we have recommended, the surplus revenue of the country will be very considerable at the end of the year 1854-55. But, Sir, I look to other resources for that year than to increasing profits or to the increased population of this country, and I will mention what they are. I look to a great retrenchment in the public expenditure of this country; and I will, if the Committee allow me, advert for one moment to this topic. I believe that any great retrenchment can only be secured by consulting the efficiency of our establishments, and trusting to the economy which is the natural consequence of that efficiency. I do not think it possible that the result can be reaped till 1854-55. I hope the House will permit me very shortly to show to them, by a remarkable illustration, what is the result of administrative reforms conducted on the principle of efficiency without any regard to what is called mere economy. I, in my estimate of the effects of administrative reform, should have spoken of millions; but I am now going to deal with an instance in which only thousands of pounds are concerned; but the case I am about to lay before you is a real case which, however slight in instance, will serve to show the principle. It is due to my noble friend the Member for Buckingham (the Marquis of Chandos) to say that I am entirely indebted to him for the case in question; and I may most sincerely say of him that since he has been in the service of Her Majesty, there never was a public man who devoted his life so completely to the public

service. In preparing the measures of administrative reform which I wish to bring before the House, and in making a catalogue of the establishments to be attended to, I found in the Report of the Select Committee of 1848 upon Miscellaneous Expenditure, of which I believe an honourable member opposite was the chairman, this memorandum—" Whether a reform might not be effected by uniting the Chief Secretary's Office in Ireland with the Privy Council Office." That suggestion was made in 1848. I called the attention of my noble friend the Member for Buckingham to this passage, and I said, " Will you go to Ireland, and will you take somebody with you to aid you in your labours, and examine into this question of the Chief Secretary's Office in Ireland with the Privy Council Office ? But; mind you, mere retrenchment is not our object ; our object is efficiency. If more money is necessary to make the department efficient, you shall have it ; but go to Ireland, examine into the whole question, and report to me by what means you can render the office more efficient."

Well, Sir, he went to Ireland, accompanied by the Secretary of the Audit Board, one of the most intelligent and assiduous of our public officers. They made their inquiries into the Chief Secretary's Office at Dublin. Remember that by the Report of the Committee of 1848 it was suggested whether the consolidation of the Chief Secretary's Office and the Privy Council Office would not be practicable. My noble friend, however, effected a consolidation, not only of the Chief Secretary's Office and the Privy Council Office, but of the Fines and Penalties Office. He had to deal with departments maintained at an annual cost of £21,738. He put the whole office into the most efficient state that a public office can be in, and the consequence of its being put into a most efficient state is, that the cost of £21,738 has been reduced by the sum of £5,178. Thus the saving effected by an inquiry conducted without any other consideration but that of efficiency produced a saving of 25 per cent. upon the original cost ; and yet I am told that nothing can be done in administrative reforms. I must, in justice to my noble friend, notice another instance.

My noble friend is of a too retiring nature : there are very few men more capable of imparting information to the House, especially upon matters of finance ; but he takes refuge instead in that indomitable power of application for which he

is distinguished. There was an application made, and apparently a very fair one, by the office of the Secretary at War, when the Militia Bill was passed, for an increase of staff. There was, of course, a very considerable increase of duty in the office consequent upon the new measure, and it was just one of those demands which might have been conceded heedlessly, and which anyone, upon a superficial view of the case, might have readily accorded. But I, having great confidence in the principle of administrative reform and equal confidence in the abilities of my noble friend, before we agreed to any increase of expenditure, requested him to appoint a committee of inquiry, which he did with the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of the Audit Board and a gentleman not now a member of this House, for whom I have a great respect, the present Deputy Secretary at War, Mr. Hawes. The committee examined the subject, and put the office into a most efficient state, and the whole of the additional business is carried on without one farthing of additional expense. In the case of the Irish Office the persons employed were reduced from fifty-seven to forty. But allow me to remind the House that retrenchment was not the object, although economy was the result. Efficiency was the object, and it was effected at a saving of expense. These are, some may think, minute instances, but they are instances well worthy of attention. The Government have been dealing, however, with much larger instances. They have been attempting to deal with the great departments of public expenditure; and, as the results of that attempt, I, as the organ of the Government, express our opinion that there may be a very considerable retrenchment made in the public expenditure, and that this retrenchment may be brought to bear in the year 1854-55. But, Sir, one thing is quite clear—that you cannot embark in an undertaking of this kind unless you have the fair support of the House of Commons.

Now, my own opinion is this—that it is not wise to grapple with these great departments of public expenditure by committees of the House of Commons. I am of opinion that you must deal with them by commissions—the same commissions that have been brought to bear upon the revenue departments; but, although we may have commissions and the royal sanction, it is necessary that the questions should be fairly brought

before the House of Commons in the way of exposition, so that you should also have the moral sanction and support of the House. It is, perhaps, the most difficult undertaking which a minister can embark in; and unless he has, I may say, both the Crown and Parliament to back him, failure is certain, though with that support I think success is equally sure. Well then, when I am told that I have no good ground for my surplus of 1854-55, my answer is that I believe we shall have much more than the surplus which I cursorily ventured upon in my general statement. I tell you that we have other resources upon which we depend, and that I believe it will be the fault of the House of Commons if, in the year 1854-55, they do not find their public service more efficient than it is, and less costly. I think I have now noticed every objection of importance which has been brought against the Government propositions. I have avoided entering into the question as to the unconstitutionality of our conduct with respect to the income tax. Legitimate opportunities will hereafter arise for commenting upon all that may be said upon this head, and the House will, I doubt not, come to a fair decision upon it.

Although many minute objections have been made to points of detail, I have not stopped to notice these; I have not stopped to vindicate that part of the income tax relating to the farmers' schedule. I shall be prepared to lay before the Committee the facts and reasons which have induced us to take that course; but I may state now that our only object was to make as close an approximation to justice as possible, and I will not vote for that schedule if it is not the prevailing feeling of the House that it is a just arrangement. I will not enter now into the question of the hop duty and things of that kind. After so protracted a debate, and following so many speakers who commented upon so many points in the financial scheme of the Government, I hope the Committee will feel that if I have avoided some of those points, it has been from deference to the time of the House, and not from any wish of my own to avoid the discussion. But some advice has been offered to me which I ought, perhaps, to notice. I have been told to withdraw my Budget. I was told that Mr. Pitt withdrew his Budget, and I know that more recently other persons have done so too. Sir, I do not aspire to the fame of Mr. Pitt, but I will not submit to the degradation of others. No, Sir;

I have seen the consequences of a Government not being able to pass their measures—consequences not honourable to the Government, not advantageous to the country, and not in my opinion conducive to the reputation of this House, which is most dear to me.

I remember a Budget which was withdrawn, and re-withdrawn, and withdrawn again in the year 1848. What was the consequence of that Government thus existing upon sufferance? What was the consequence to the finances of the country? Why, that injurious, unjust and ignoble transaction respecting the commutation of the window tax and house duty, which now I am obliged to attempt to remedy. The grievance is deeper than mere questions of party consideration. When parties are balanced—when a Government cannot pass its measures—the highest principles of public life, the most important of the dogmas of politics, degenerate into party questions. Look at this question of direct taxation—the most important question of the day. It is a question which must sooner or later force itself upon everybody's attention; and I see before me many who I know sympathise, so far as that important principle is concerned, with the policy of the Government. Well, direct taxation, although applied with wisdom, temperance and prudence, has become a party question. Talk of administrative reform! Talk of issuing commissions to inquire into our docykards! Why, if I were, which is not impossible, by intense labour to bring forward a scheme which might save a million annually to the country, administrative reform would become a party question to-morrow. Yes! I know what I have to face. I have to face a coalition. The combination may be successful. But coalitions, although successful, have always found this, that their triumph has been short. This, too, I know, that England does not love coalitions. I appeal from the coalition to the public opinion which governs this country—to that public opinion whose mild and irresistible influence can control even the decrees of Parliaments, and without whose support the most august and ancient institutions are but "the baseless fabric of a vision."

ARCHBISHOP MAGEE

WILLIAM CONNOR MAGEE was Bishop of Peterborough when he delivered his famous speech against the disestablishment of the Irish Church. As a masterpiece of eloquence, it took the House of Lords by surprise, almost by storm. Magee, who had very recently become an English bishop, had long been known in Ireland as a powerful and popular preacher of the Evangelical school. This was not, perhaps, a training likely to result in Parliamentary success. But Magee, in spite of his rhetorical exuberance, had a keenly logical mind. His Irish humour was accompanied by a practical shrewdness which prevented him from overstepping the limits of moderation and good sense. His subsequent career in the House of Lords did not indeed repeat the extraordinary triumph of 1869. The circumstances of the time and of the man must be taken into account. The question of the Irish Church had aroused on both sides an extraordinary amount of feeling. Magee, having been lately transferred from the ecclesiastical establishment of his own country to the ecclesiastical establishment of this, occupied an advantageous position. It was as the chivalrous champion of the institution in which he had been bred, and from which he had emerged, that he came forward to attack the Bill. His speech is argumentative as well as denunciatory, historical as well as controversial, a defence as well as an assault. The position was not an easy one. The Church of Ireland, which had been annexed to the Church of England by the Act of Union, ministered to a small minority of the population. The great majority of Irishmen were Roman Catholics, and an appreciable portion of Irish Protestants were Presbyterians. A General Election had just been held, at which the subject had been thoroughly discussed, and a large

majority, a majority in each of the three kingdoms, had pronounced for Irish disestablishment. In such circumstances the defence of the Irish Establishment was not an easy one, and Magee's triumph was proportionately great.

The Disestablishment of the Irish Church

My Lords, in rising to address your Lordships, I do so with feelings of the very deepest anxiety, and with unfeigned diffidence, owing to my having become so recently a Member of your Lordships' House, and my natural fear in taking part in so great a discussion as this, that I may, by some careless word of mine, rather damage than advance the cause which I seek to support. Still there is one great encouragement I feel—it is a thought that has been present to my mind through all this debate—that is, that I have the privilege of addressing an assembly in which freedom of speech is still permitted to its members. I have heard much, my Lords, since I have had the honour of being a Member of your Lordships' House, and I have read something, about the antiquated prejudices which still haunt it, but which are not to be found in the other House; but among those antiquated prejudices I rejoice to see that your Lordships still retain the notion that a deliberative assembly should be allowed to deliberate. I have no fear, my Lords, at least upon this point—that if the remarks which I venture to make should be distasteful to some of your Lordships, I shall be at least free to make them. I am reminded that your political education is imperfect; but I am glad to find that you have not yet adopted the most recent form of Parliamentary *clôture*, which simply consists in howling down the person who takes the unpopular side in a debate. I regret that in the first few words I have spoken I should have called forth expressions of dissent; but I think I am justified in describing what I think I saw and heard in what I do not venture to call another House, but a public meeting in which there were present a great many Members of Parliament.

I have no intention of detaining your Lordships at any length on some of the very minor issues that have been raised in this controversy; and the less so because I am ready to

admit that on those points all the strength of the argument lies with the supporters of this measure. I am free to confess that I cannot regard this Bill as a proposal to violate the Coronation Oath. The Coronation Oath seems to me to be the seal of a compact between two parties; and I cannot understand how, because one of the parties appeals to the Divine judgment to punish a breach of the compact, both parties may not agree to an alteration of the compact. In the second place, I cannot regard this measure as a violation of the Act of Union. I regard the Act of Union as a treaty, not merely between two Legislatures, the members of which may be, and for the most part are, no longer in existence, but as a compact between two nations which still exist, and which have a right to modify the terms of the treaty mutually agreed on between them. Neither can I regard this measure as an attack on private property. I cannot but entirely accept the distinction drawn by the noble and learned Lord last night between corporate and private property. I cannot regard the property of the Irish Church as private property, because it seems to land me in this absurdity—that it would be a matter of entire indifference what were the numbers of the Irish Church, whether large or small, and that if, instead of 700,000, they were 70,000, or 7,000, they would still have a right in the same property. I, therefore, willingly accept the noble and learned Lord's distinction between corporate and private property. But I go further—I not only accept that distinction but I insist upon it as the very ground on which I entreat your Lordships to be very cautious how the property of the Irish Church is dealt with. It is quite true that corporate property is different from private property. It is not private property, neither, on the other hand, is it absolutely and simply public property in the same sense as property derived from the taxation of the country. Corporate property is partly private and partly public—public in its uses and the conditions on which it is held, and private as regards the persons who are interested in it. This is the reason why it appears to me to be very perilous to meddle with corporate property; because, in its public character, it invites attack, and by its partly private character endangers all private property, if the conditions on which the corporation holds its property be unjustly or unfairly dealt with. And for this

reason you will always observe in history that corporate property is the first to be attacked in all great democratic revolutions. Especially is this so in the case of ecclesiastical corporate property, because ecclesiatical corporations for the most part are very wealthy, and, at the same time, are weak. It is easy to find a flaw in their titles; and religious corporations charged with the religious culture of a nation, or of any part of a nation, are always easy to attack because they must always, more or less, fail, and it can, therefore, be always alleged that they have failed in the performance of their duty. Therefore I say that religious property is always the first to be assailed in revolutions. Revolutions commence with sacrilege and go on to communism; or, to put it in the more gentle and euphemistic language of the day, revolutions begin with the Church and go on to the land. For these reasons—not because the property of the Irish Church is not corporate property—I would ask you to guard it with special jealousy from any attack which may be made upon it.

But passing from these minor issues in the controversy, I do feel that there are larger and deeper questions at stake than these. I believe that the great question of justice or injustice really underlies the whole of this question. I believe, my Lords, that far below these merely superficial questions of ascendency or sentimental grievance, or the badge of conquest—I do believe that deep in the English heart lies this great thought above all others—that the Irish Church is an injustice; therefore it must be done away with. I desire to meet this plea fully and fairly; and I desire to say for myself, so lately a member of that Church—that we re-echo the words the Prime Minister used with reference to this Bill; and we say if the Irish Church be less than a justice, then, in God's name, let it perish. The three great issues that have been raised in this debate, so far as I have been able to follow it, have been, first of all, that this is a question of justice; secondly, that it is a question of policy; and, thirdly, that it is in accordance with the verdict of the nation. With all respect, I venture to join issue upon every one of these three pleas. I say distinctly that justice does not demand this measure, that policy does not require it, that the verdict of the country has not only not gone in its favour, but that, on the contrary, the measure in the greater part of its details seems to me to be in

direct and flagrant contradiction to the verdict of the country. In arguing these three pleas, I shall endeavour to consider each of them by itself and separately. I shall not attempt to mix them together according as may suit the exigencies of my argument, because I observe that in discussing this measure, people very often fail to take them alone. We are told, in the first place, that the Irish Church is a grievous injustice because it possesses property that was wrongfully taken from the Roman Catholics. We try to answer this argument, and endeavour to show that this property was never in the possession of the Roman Catholic Church, and we appeal to the ancient history of the Irish Church to show it. But when we are doing that we are told—"What is the use of this reference to old doctrinal history? It does not matter in the least whether the Irish Church was Protestant or not in the days of St. Patrick; at the present moment it is a mischief and a nuisance, and there can be no pacification of Ireland until we get rid of it." When we turn to the argument of policy and endeavour to show that the sweeping away the Irish Church will not pacify Ireland, and that it will dissatisfy one part of the Irish nation without satisfying the other—what is the answer? "Oh, we never thought, we never dreamt, that this measure would pacify Ireland—we are quite aware it will not; but we must clear our own consciences; it is a high question of justice—*fiat justitia, ruat cœlum!*" Lastly, when we maintain that this is neither a measure of justice nor a measure of policy, we are told that there is a good deal to be said on that side of the question; but that the time for saying it has gone by; that the verdict of the country has spoken, and we had better submit ourselves to the will of the nation. I will not attempt to imitate that mode of argument, but will take each plea separately. In the first place, then, as to the plea that the Irish Church is an injustice, the arguments used in its support are simply two—one, the great argument of religious equality, and the other, the argument that the Irish Church is the Church of the minority. Now, my Lords, as I understand the argument in respect to absolute religious equality, it is this—that the conferring by the State upon one sect in the country any special favour or privilege over other sects is an injustice, inasmuch as no one sect is more entitled to endowment or privilege than another;

as special favour is conferred upon the Irish Church, it is a violation of the principle of religious equality. It is no reply, I admit, to say that this principle of religious equality applies equally to England. It is perfectly clear that it does apply equally to England as to Ireland—unless, indeed, we are ready to perpetrate injustice in England because we are strong and Dissent is weak; but that we will not venture to do it in Ireland because we are weak there, and those who differ from the Church are strong. It is, in fact, convenient now to tell us that the principle applies to the English as well as to the Irish Church; but I may remark that it was not quite so convenient to say so last October. I distinctly admit that if the favour shown to any sect be shown for the sake of that sect, and that alone, there is a manifest injustice in the endowment of that sect in preference to others. But I deny that this is the principle of religious Establishments at all. The endowment given to the sect, my Lords, is not given for the benefit of the sect, but for the benefit of the State. It is not with a view to make the sect richer, but to make the State religious. The privilege and the wealth that come to the sect are not the object, but the accident, of the endowment. The object of endowment is that, inasmuch as the State has an army to contend against its enemies without, so it has an army to contend against the enemies within of sin, ignorance, and crime; and when the State selects any one sect in preference to another, the simple question is whether the sect is better qualified than other sects to do the work which the State wants to have done. If that be so, it seems to me that there is no more injustice in the State contracting, if I may use the expression, with an ecclesiastical firm to do its duty of religious teaching than there is in the State contracting with a secular firm to do any secular work which it may require. In both cases there is inequality consequent upon the act, but in neither is there injustice—because it appears to me that to treat equally things that are unequal, is not justice, but the very greatest injustice. The question, therefore, whether injustice is done to one sect by the establishment of another resolves itself into this further question—Is the sect selected better fitted to do the work of the country than the other? Or, in other words, in order to have religious equality you must have equality of religions. What I would ask in the next place is

—Are there two rival sects in Ireland equally fitted for the work the State has to do? Your Lordships need not fear that I shall enter upon a theological discussion. I am quite aware that the modern theory of the State is that it should have no religion—a theory to which I am almost a convert after perusing some of the details of this Bill, because it goes very near to assuring me that, whether a State may have a religion or not, it may occasionally forget that it has a conscience. The question as between these two sects is decided by the Bill which I hold, and beyond the limits of which I shall not travel. Why is it that we are not discussing this evening a Bill for "levelling up" instead of one for "levelling down?" Why are we not discussing that which I venture to say would be the most statesmanlike mode of dealing with the question? We have heard from the supporters of the Bill again and again that the reason is that neither the English nor the Scotch people will tolerate the endowment, as they call it, of Popery. What is that, but in other words, to say that the English and Scotch people are so deeply convinced of the inequality of these two religions that, whilst they could endure the endowment of the one, nothing would induce them to listen to the proposal for the endowment of the other? Why, the Bill itself is founded upon the principle of the inequality of the two religions; and so far from it being true that it has been attempted to defend the Irish Church with the No Popery cry, my belief is that it is at this moment about to be destroyed in obedience to that very cry. I go further, and say that this Bill enacts the most flagrant religious inequality —because, if it passes and the Irish Church is disestablished and disendowed, the next thing the Roman Catholics will say to you upon the principle of religious inequality will be—"In England and in Scotland the religion of the majority of the people is established and endowed, and in Ireland the religion of the majority is neither established nor endowed; how can you call that religious equality?" What would be the necessary result of such a demand as that? Would it not be that you would come face to face with the very same difficulty in England, and to meet that demand for religious equality you would need either to level up or level down—either to establish or endow the Roman Catholics in Ireland, or disestablish and disendow the Church in England? I say, therefore, that

the Bill establishes a principle of religious inequality of the most glaring kind. Then the next plea is this—We are told that the Irish Church is a great injustice, because the funds, which should be the property of the whole nation—a national State fund—have been given to be the property of a minority. Well, if that be so, I would ask why not endow the majority? If the minority are in wrongful possession of the property, why not hand it over to the majority at once? Do noble Lords suppose that until they have done this the majority will really be satisfied? One noble and learned Lord (Lord Penzance) who spoke to-night with a candour which, if I may be allowed to say so, did him high honour, distinctly expressed the opinion—which I respectfully submit to the attention of the Government—that the majority in Ireland will not be satisfied, and will not have justice, until this is done. But I respectfully deny the position that the funds of the majority of the nation are in the possession of the minority. I deny that the Church of the minority possesses funds which ever did belong to the majority. I do not believe that one shilling of tithe rent-charge, or that one acre of glebe land in Ireland, ever belonged to the Church of the majority. Tithe was paid for the first time within the pale after the Synod of Cashel, when the Church of Ireland, though the Roman Catholic Church, was the Church of the Anglican minority; and the Ulster glebes were given to the Protestants of Ulster surely at a time when it was distinctly known that the Protestant Church was the Church of the minority. My Lords, I contend that the Church of the minority, standing on the land of the minority, teaching the faith of the minority, paid by the minority, is not guilty of that misappropriation of the funds of the majority with which it is charged. If I may venture to detain your Lordships upon a question closely connected with this, I would ask you how it comes to pass that the greater part of the land of Ireland is in possession of the minority of the people? Because your Lordships may depend upon it that that lies at the root of everything. How comes it to pass, I ask, that the great majority of the landlords of Ireland are Protestants? For the simple reason, which, however, I have not heard alluded to in this debate—because the majority of the Irish people—the Celtic population of Ireland—took the losing side in the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries, in the great struggle between Protestant England and the Catholic League of Europe. That was a life and death struggle between the parties, and, unhappily for themselves, the Celtic population sided with the Catholic Sovereigns against their own. The battle was fought out between England and the Catholic League in the terrible manner in which such battles were fought in those days. On the one hand, there were the Penal Laws—those infernal Penal Laws, as I will join in calling them, which now excite our indignation; but, be it remembered, that it was by those detestable Penal Laws that the England of those days fought the bulls of Popes that encouraged the assassination of princes. The Penal Laws were not, as some noble Lords seem to suppose, established for the defence of the Church of Ireland. They were passed by English statesmen in defence of English rule in Ireland; and they would have been passed by the Parliament of those days with equal harshness and severity, whatever had been the religion of the Celtic population, if that population had risen against the English rule. It was not in defence of the Church, but in defence of English rule, and against the Celtic population that those detestable laws were passed. Well, then, how stands the case? At the time of the rebellion England confiscated large estates belonging to the Celtic rebels. On nine-tenths of those estates England planted laymen, on the remaining tenth she planted Anglican pastors. Now I ask this one question—"Was the confiscation of the land of the rebels in Ireland just or unjust?" If it was unjust, then undo it all. If, in the name of justice, you are to trace back so far the roots of things in Irish history; if you are to make your revolutions in the sacred name of justice, then, in the name of that justice, give back to the descendants of those owners the confiscated estates that you took from them. But do not mock them—for it is mocking them—by telling them that Protestant ascendency is an evil thing. And, then, how do you propose to deal with it? By telling them your land is divided into nine-tenths and one-tenth—the nine-tenths in the hands of the Protestant landlords and the one-tenth in the hands of the Protestant clergy—and we propose to satisfy their demand for justice by ousting from the land the one proprietor who is the most popular, most constantly resident, and least offensive, while you retain, in all the bitter injustice

of their original tenure, the proprietors who are the most detested, and whose possessions they most covet. Do your Lordships imagine that the Irish people will be satisfied with that? Do you forget that you have to deal with the most quick-witted people in Europe—people whose eyes are intently fixed on this question—and do you think that they will feel other than the most bitter disappointment when you tell them that you are about to tear down the hateful flag of Protestant ascendency, and they find you only tear off a single corner of it—or about the fortieth part of the whole? The Irish peasant has already given his answer to your offer of pacification—your pacification consists in refusing him the land, which he does want, and giving him the destruction of the Church which he does not—the Irish peasant writes his answer—and a terrible answer it is—an answer which, I am sorry to say, English statesmen in past times have taught the Irish peasant to give—that murder and outrage are a necessary stimulant to the consciences of English statesmen. You tell him you are doing that which will satisfy him, and he writes his answer in that dread handwriting which it needs no Daniel to interpret, and which so often makes English statesmen tremble; and in that answer he tells you he will be satisfied with nothing else than the possession of the land—which I do the members of Her Majesty's Government the justice to believe they have no intention to give. Thus, my Lords, I fear I have very imperfectly, and at greater length than I intended, put before you the question of religious equality, and the possession of the land in Ireland by a minority and the Church of the minority; and I venture to think I have shown there is not that violent injustice either in the existence of the Irish Church or in its possession of property of which we have heard so much.

Next comes the great question of policy. We are told that this is a measure of high State policy, and that it is absolutely necessary for the pacification of Ireland. My Lords, I believe that I am doing the Irish Church no more than justice, when I say that, if you could satisfy them of that, they would be willing—just as they believe their claims to be—to sacrifice them all in order to obtain peace for that unhappy and distracted country. But is this really a measure of sound policy? and how should we judge the policy of any measure affecting

Ireland? Surely such a measure ought to be just, ought to be a healing, ought to be a civilising, measure. Let us try this measure by its effects upon those three Irelands—for there are three—with which you have to deal. The noble Earl who introduced this question last evening (Earl Granville) asked the question, "Should we not deal with Ireland as we would be done by?" Had I the honour of following the noble Earl, I should have asked, as I now ask—"Which Ireland do you mean?" There is the Ireland of the North and the Ireland of the South. These are two and very different Irelands. But, according to my reckoning, there are three. There is a Protestant Ireland—there are the Roman Catholic peasantry of Ireland—and there is, distinct from both, a nation within a nation, owning a separate allegiance—there is the Roman Catholic priesthood. These are the three parties for whom you propose to carry a measure of great State policy. But, in the first place, how will this measure affect the Irish Protestants and Irish Protestantism? For I do that justice to Her Majesty's Government that I believe they do not desire anything that would be for the real injury of Protestantism in Ireland. No Liberal Government, indeed, could possibly desire it. A Liberal Government and Protestantism ought to be natural allies. Surely at least the alliance between Liberalism and Protestantism is more natural than an alliance between Liberalism and Ultramontanism. Now let us consider the effect of this measure of policy on the feelings of Irish Protestants. Will it have a healing effect on them? My Lords, the Irish Protestants are at this moment giving you their answer as the Irish peasants gave theirs—each after his own fashion. The Irish Protestants tell you that this measure, done at the time it has been done, and with the words by which it was accompanied, has sunk deep into their hearts with a bitter and exasperating sense of wrong which centuries will not efface. It is not only in their judgment a harsh and bitter measure, but it has been accompanied by hard and cruel words. One member of Her Majesty's Government has thought it decent and consistent with his duty to tell those Irish Protestants in the hour of their dismay and suffering, when they are reeling under a blow inflicted by the hand of England upon our most faithful and loyal fellow-subjects—I say, one member of Her Majesty's Government has thought

it decent and becoming to tell us—" We have offended a clique, but we have conciliated a nation." My Lords, these words will rankle long in the hearts of these people. They say that having ever been the faithful and devoted servants of England, and staunchly upholding the authority of this country at a time when she sorely needed it, you are now about to cast them off without even a kind word of gratitude for old deeds of service and faithful and devoted loyalty. They are sorely and naturally irritated. They tell you you have effectually repealed the Union by this measure. Although you may not have violated the Union by it, it repeals the Union by turning every Unionist into a Repealer without turning a single Repealer into a Unionist. That is the utterance of the Protestants of Ireland, and, of course, it is highly improper. It is very wrong indeed for them to speak in this very unbecoming way. It is very unnatural that they who believe, rightly or wrongly, that you are taking their religious endowments from them, should speak words which savour somewhat in their anger of dissatisfaction. At the same time, we are told it is the most natural, proper, and righteous thing for the Roman Catholics of Ireland, who believe you took the religious endowments from them 300 years ago, to refuse to be loyal until you give those endowments back. Well, my Lords, this is the effect of this measure at this moment in the minds of the Protestants of Ireland. But we are told this is but a passing and momentary irritation, and that after a while the Protestants of Ireland will be filled with the deepest gratitude to Her Majesty's Government for the favour which has been bestowed on them and their faith. We are told in words full of all manner of glowing metaphor, of the wonderful benefit this Bill is to bestow on Ireland. We are told that we are assisting at something like a launch of the Irish Church, and not its wreck ; and that a number of affectionate, faithful, and earnest volunteers are engaged in knocking away the shores to let the ship out upon the open sea. Foremost amongst those volunteer shipwrights are some members of the English Church, admirable vicars and other dignitaries, all full of a generous anxiety to bestow on their reverend brethren in Ireland that measure of apostolic poverty which they show no particular affection for themselves. My Lords, if these most reverend and very reverend clergymen and gentlemen, who are so generously

exhorting the Irish clergy to swallow, even without a wry face, the potion prepared for them by Her Majesty's Government, will have the kindness to do what nurses do to children, and just take the least sip of the potion, their views on the subject, I cannot help thinking, may undergo some change. But we must treat more seriously this argument of apostolic poverty and the power of the voluntary principle in the case of the Protestants of Ireland. We are asked, when we dread the consequences of this measure—Have we lost our faith in Christianity; and whether we are going to insult the Protestants of Ireland by saying that their Church will not survive, even when it is disestablished and disendowed? We are reminded also of what is rather a truism—that an Establishment is not its endowments. Of course not, any more than a man is his purse; but to deprive a man of his purse may have an uncomfortable and unpleasant effect not only on his moral but on his spiritual nature. This argument of apostolic poverty has this peculiarity, and that is, that often as I have heard it used by laymen of the clergy, I never heard a layman who remembered that the flocks of the apostles were as poor as the apostles themselves. What is so conducive to the spirituality of the clergyman may be equally conducive to the spirituality of the layman. We are told that Christianity in the first three centuries succeeded admirably without endowments, and we are asked why it does not do so at the present day? But Christianity succeeded admirably in the first three centuries without printing presses and telegraphs. Why, then, does it not do so now? Suppose this were a Bill to deprive the Irish clergy for the future of the privilege of printing or reading books, and, when they complained of the injustice, were to be told that the apostles conquered the world without a printing press or a steam engine. The argument is as good in the one case as the other, and it proves simply this—that, Christianity having obtained the great fruit of its victories over the world, there is no wisdom or sense in asking Christianity to surrender those fruits and give up its conquests in order to begin afresh and fight the battle over again. We are reminded that Christianity is divine. It is divine; and for the very reason—that I believe it to be a divine gift, given like all divine gifts, upon its own conditions—for this very reason do I fear for the nation that rejects this divine gift or

does it dishonour. If the Union between Church and State be really the highest ideal of the existence of Christianity in the world—and it remains to be proved that it is not—if this were part of the intention of the Divine Founder, then the separation of the Church and State places each upon a lower level, and in a worse condition for their respective works in God's world than each would occupy if united together. Then I am reminded that the Protestants of Ireland are wealthy, and that it insults them to suppose that they will not support their Church on the voluntary system. But who is it that tells us that the Protestant landlords are wealthy and will be able to provide ministrations for their poorer tenantry? On the back of this Bill stands the name of the distinguished statesman who tells us it is his wish that we may remove these Protestant landlords from Ireland and replace them by a Roman Catholic tenantry. I say it is impossible that these two things are compatible. Does that distinguished statesman imagine we can believe that these two things are compatible? If he does, I can only say—and I will quote his own words—that then without the previous degradation of being made a Bishop—at least, such a Bishop as is made in these degenerate days—he must have an infinite fund of faith in the credulity of his fellow-countrymen. And now let me ask how this question will work socially. Her Majesty's Government appear to have immense confidence in the force of the voluntary principle in the minds of the Protestant landlords; and yet it is a strange thing that they cannot trust the Protestant landlords to provide for the lunatics, and the deaf, and the mutes. We all know there are men who will relieve temporal distress when they will not relieve spiritual distress; and yet we are to believe that the Protestant landlords, deep as is their love for their faith, are so curiously constituted that they will be most willing to provide for the spiritual needs of the poor labourers on their estates, and utterly unwilling to provide for their temporal needs. But, supposing this measure is carried, what will be its real social effect? It will be one of two things. The landlord is to be obliged to provide for himself under this Bill religious ministrations, while he continues to pay the whole rent-charge which he undertook upon the faith of having religious ministration provided. Now, what will he do in this case? Possibly he may provide himself

with a chaplain; he may have a tame Levite about his house. He may provide himself in some such fashion as that; but when he gets dissatisfied with the ministrations of that humble spiritual servant, or grudges the cost of his keep, what will he do? He will come to England, where he would find those ministrations furnished without any cost whatever—so that the direct effect of this measure would be to promote absenteeism. But if he remain on his estate his direct interest is to increase the number of the Protestant tenantry on his estate—because every fresh one lessens the burden of supporting these spiritual ministrations; and thus if the landlord remains it leads to religious evictions, and this by way of pacifying Ireland. What character will the Protestantism of Ireland assume under this measure? What will be the quality of the religious ministrations? I was very much struck with an anecdote, told with great eloquence by the present Prime Minister on that memorable tour of his in Lancashire—a story which he told more than once, and which he seemed to consider of great importance. It was a story—I cannot vouch for its truth—I mean no imputation whatever upon the veracity, or even upon the careful accuracy, of the Prime Minister. I merely guard myself, because I am aware that the truth of the story, which no doubt was supplied to him, has been questioned. But, so far as my argument goes, the truth or error of the story is altogether immaterial. The story was that there was a certain clergyman in the North of Ireland whose parishioners insisted on placing Orange flags on his church, in opposition to his wishes and against his protest. The Prime Minister said: "There, you see what the Protestant Establishment of Ireland does." And so I say. The Protestant Establishment produced in that case a clergyman who, because he was established and endowed was more liberal and more tolerant, and was enabled to be more liberal and tolerant, than certain members of his flock. But what is the effect which this measure will have? It rewards this clergyman—this supposititious clergyman we will say—for his loyalty and his tolerance, by proceeding to disestablish and disendow him, and then to make him entirely dependent on a very intolerant flock, who are represented as using his church as a place for religious and party emblems—you make him dependent on them for his daily bread. This

is to convert the future clergymen of Ireland into fanatics, almost in spite of themselves, and as the price of their daily food. How many itinerant lecturers of a political kind does the right rev. prelate think will be found in Ireland five years after the passing of this measure? The absolute necessity of each clergyman to gather the sheep out of his neighbour's fold—if he is to have any fleece at all—which this would induce, would be likely to promote anything but amity and concord. So much for the effect of the measure upon Protestants. What is to be the effect of it upon the Roman Catholic peasant? You impoverish the people by removing the Protestant landlord, you place upon him a double and heavy burden; you throw upon him the sustenance of the ministry; you take away the rent charge, and remove that elevating and civilising influence exercised by the more highly educated Protestant clergy—by these various means you are leaving the Roman Catholic peasant in Ireland to sink down into deeper darkness. Then as regards the Roman Catholic priesthood of Ireland, I have not a word of disrespect to speak of them; and if I had it is not in this place that I should speak it, but in their presence. I speak, as far as possible, of the Roman Catholic priesthood as I should speak of the priesthood of our own Church. Destroy the Irish Church Establishment to please the Roman Catholic priest and—human nature is human nature still—there may be a feeling of gratified rivalry in his mind. But the Roman Catholic priest firmly believes that the property you are taking from the Established Church, but which you refuse to give him, is his. He believes the rights of his Church to be indefeasible. *Nullum tempus occurrit Ecclesiæ.* In the name of religious equality—the very name of which he utterly abhors, and which is utterly unknown to the genius and history of his Church—you take property which he believes to belong to his Church, and divert it to other purposes, and then you profess to expect that he will be satisfied. Then as to the land and education questions which now disturb Ireland. You must necessarily have the Roman Catholic priest against you. The Roman Catholic priest is a peasant by birth and, to his honour be it said, remains a peasant in his sympathies, which are with the peasantry in this matter of land; and bribe him as you may—and it seems to me a very coarse bribe—bribe him with the destruction of the Church,

I believe that you will find him true to the last on this question of land, and that you will not secure him as an ally in dealing with this question. Then as to the question of education. An alliance between the Ultramontanists and a Liberal Government on this question is quite impossible. You will have increased the fanaticism of all these religious sects; you will have set them still more strongly against each other; you will find that you have not produced paradisaical amity by compelling a resort to paradisaical scantiness of dress; and you will find that these various bodies will not strike up eternal friendship when they find that you have despoiled each of them in turn. It is a sad thing to see that the minds of English statesmen seem still to move in the same unhappy groove in matters that relate to Ireland; their principle seems to consist only in successive confiscations. England confiscated the property of Ireland at the bidding of a Pope at a time when the inhabitants of that country were designated by the King as the "beastly Irish." The policy of confiscation was again carried out during the reign of the Stuarts and of Cromwell; and now, in the reign of Victoria, the last device for regulating Irish affairs to be found in the repertory of English statesmen, is another confiscation, but, my Lords, with this difference—that, whereas, in those days England confiscated the property of the disloyal and rewarded the loyal, in these days she proceeds to mend matters by confiscating the property of the loyal to reward the disloyal.

If I may still venture for a short time to trespass on your Lordships' attention, I would ask one question more. I would ask whether this measure—unjust and impolitic as I believe it to be—does really satisfy the verdict of the nation. We are told that this measure is imperatively demanded by the verdict of the nation. I think I may take some exception to this phrase "verdict of the nation" as applied to the decision at the hustings. It seems to me that the duty of the voters at the hustings is not to pass laws but to choose legislators. It is, in my opinion, rather tending in a revolutionary direction to talk of the hasty and impassioned verdict at the hustings as the deliberate verdict of the nation. I should rather call it the empanelling the jury which is to give the verdict. I thank the noble Lords on those benches for reminding me by their cheers. I should have thought that that

jury consists not only of those empanelled at the hustings, but also those who have an hereditary right to sit in this place, and that the verdict of the nation is really the verdict of the Three Estates of the Realm. Then, my Lords, I might take further objection to this verdict on the ground of the arts by which it has been obtained. Speaking of matters which are within my own knowledge, I do not hesitate to say that in the whole history of fiction there has been nothing to equal the persistent, I might say the malignant, exaggerations that have been circulated through England for years past with respect to the Irish Church. I believe the minds of people have been poisoned and influenced by these representations, and exception may fairly be taken to a verdict obtained by such means as these. But I am willing, for one, to accept the verdict of the nation, when that verdict has been completely and distinctly ascertained. Nay, more, I should be one of the first to implore your Lordships to carry that verdict out in this Bill. Now, my Lords, the verdict of the nation was given on four issues—on disestablishment—on partial disendowment—on absolute impartiality as regards all religions —and on large generosity and kindness in dealing with the Irish Church. As regards disestablishment, I distinctly recognise the fact that the nation has pronounced—and, I believe, irrevocably pronounced—for the disestablishment of the Irish Church; much as I grieve and lament the fact, I have no wish to affect ignorance of it; but if I were an Irish clergyman, in the present state of relations between the Government and the Irish Church, the circumstance would not greatly distress me, because it seems to me that the Irish Church has reached that point when the State has become irreconcilably hostile to the Church, and it is for her profit and credit that she should be relieved from that which, once a source of strength and honour to both, is hereinafter to be looked upon as a cause of weakness and distress. I cannot say that, as an Irish Churchman, I should feel sorry for such a result. I should not like to see the freedom, or rather the want of freedom, of the Irish Church left in the hands of a Government consisting of men, who, however honourable, and personally, however pious and religious, had yet declared themselves implacably hostile to that Establishment. But what was the verdict of the nation that was taken on the question of disendowment? I will venture to

make use of one quotation, and but one. It is from the speech of the noble Duke, who, I believe, is the very last man to shrink from the force of any words which he may have used (the Duke of Argyll). Speaking on the 29th of June last year, the noble Duke said—

> There is a great distinction between disendowment and disestablishment, and it was not without a set purpose and deliberate and careful intention that the word "disendowment" was avoided and "disestablishment" was inserted in the Resolution. That course was adopted for the very good reason that, as far as I know, no human being proposes to disendow the Established Church altogether . . . . . Nobody has ever proposed to deprive the Church of endowments derived from private benefactions. But more than this. Under the scheme sketched by Mr. Gladstone, the Church is to be left in the possession of the Churches and parsonages and of some land adjacent, so that it could not, in perfect strictness, be said that the Church under that scheme is to be wholly deprived of its endowments. Besides, it is at the option and discretion of Parliament to what extent disendowment shall go. . . . . Therefore, those members of the House of Commons who voted for that Resolution are perfectly free to vote for any sort of compromise in respect to the endowment of the Church.

From this language it is clear that members of the House of Commons were perfectly free to vote for any sort of compromise in respect of the endowments of the Church. I hope your Lordships will bear in mind the effect of these words—especially so far as they relate to the question of disendowment. On this issue, the verdict of the nation was taken; and when persons read declarations like this, and others conceived in the same spirit, they believed that what was intended was not disendowment but only partial disendowment. I must reject a compromise carried out in a manner so different from that which such promises led us to expect. How was this question dealt with in the other House of Parliament? Every attempt to obtain the slightest benefit for the Church—every attempt to get anything beyond vested interests, which are no endowment at all—was met with the expression of a kindly disposition, ending in a positive refusal. The answer was: "We should be very glad to do this if we could do it; but it would be against the principle of the Bill, which goes to total disendowment." Again, my Lords, when a small recognition was asked for servants whom this Bill dismisses at a moment's notice—when requests of this kind were made, even by members who were supporting the Bill, there was the same reply—"We should be glad to do it but the principle of the Bill is against

it." I confess, my Lords, that when I remember these things, I feel some doubt in respect of the admirable advice given last night by the most Rev. Primate. I have not the least doubt as to the wisdom of his Grace in suggesting the amendments to which he referred; but I have considerable doubt as to whether there is any chance of our inducing the Government to accede to those Amendments, when I find that, in direct contradiction to the verdict of the nation, Amendments moved in the other House were rejected, not on the ground of any unkindly feelings, but on the ground that they were against the principle of the Bill.

My Lords, there was another point on which the verdict was taken. When this question was before the country the country was told that the Irish Church should receive "gracious and generous" treatment—that was, that the treatment should be equitable and indulgent. But, my Lords, the measure which on the hustings was described as "gracious and generous" has since been described in another place by a member of the Government as "harsh, sweeping, and severe." Again and again, I believe, the nation was told that the measure was to be "gracious and generous"; but that description of it has been repudiated by a member of the Cabinet, who has said, "Government does not affect to be generous; it could not be generous with other men's money." On the hustings the Government said: "We mean to be generous—we intend to be kind." In the other House they have said: "We do not affect to be generous; we do not intend to be indulgent." I ask whether it would be possible to put in words a more distinct and emphatic contradiction of the verdict of the country. Time does not admit of my going through all the harsh and cruel—I believe, unintentionally harsh and cruel—details of the Bill. There is the way in which the clergy are treated in respect of the glebe houses and lands. It is alleged that the money which they spent on these glebe houses they were compelled to spend by a law of the Church. That is an error. They were not compelled to spend that money by a law of the Church, nor could the laity compel them to spend it. The matter was one between the Bishops and the clergy. Again, under this Bill, the Church Commissioners will obtain money for the repair of glebe houses which they cannot apply to that purpose. Then there is a deduction for a tax which

the clergy paid to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; but that tax went towards small benefices and the repair of churches. There is generosity! But I shall not weary your Lordships by going through details which, should the Bill ever go into Committee, I shall have occasion to bring before your Lordships in regular order. I may, however, observe that the Bill is harsh and cruel in those provisions by which rectors, curates, and the Church Commissioners will be brought into triangular entanglement. It deals harshly with the curates in respect of their prospects of preferment. It deals harshly with vergers and other persons now employed in the churches, who may be turned out without a moment's notice. It pinches something here and extracts something there in a shabby and niggardly way. In the magnificent peroration to the speech by which this Bill was introduced in the other House—a peroration which must still ring in the ears of those who heard it—its distinguished author spoke of the spectacle which England would present to the civilised world when she came to perform this magnanimous act of justice and penitence. What a magnanimous sight! The first thing that this magnanimous British nation does in the performance of this act of justice and penitence is to put into her pocket the annual sum she has been in the habit of paying to Maynooth and to compensate Maynooth out of the funds of the Irish Church. The Presbyterian Members for Scotland, while joining in this exercise of magnanimity, forget that horror of Popery which was so largely relied on and so loudly expressed at the last elections in Scotland. They have changed their minds, on the theory that a bribe to Popery is nothing if preceded by plunder of the Protestant Episcopacy. Putting two sins together, they make one good action. Throughout its provisions this Bill is characterised by a hard and niggardly spirit. I am surprised by the injustice and impolicy of the measure, but I am still more astonished at its intense shabbiness. It is a small and pitiful Bill. It is not worthy of a great nation. This great nation in its act of magnanimity and penitence has done the talking, but has put the sackcloth and ashes on the Irish Church, and made the fasting be performed by the poor vergers and organists. I object to this change altogether; but if it was to be made, there could have been a more statesmanlike and generous mode of making it.

My Lords, there is one other point on which the verdict of the nation was distinctly taken. It was stated to the country that, in dealing with this subject, there should be perfect impartiality. It was written, as it were, in letters of iron, that the principle of religious equality would be perfectly carried out. I ask your Lordships to consider whether, in dealing with Maynooth and in dealing with the Irish Church, there has been real impartiality. I believe there has not been; I believe that the mode in which they have been dealt with is far from being impartial. There is another matter of great importance. It was promised that with the funds of the Irish Church there should be no endowments, no payments to the ministers of another religion, no provision for the religious teaching of persons of another faith. It appears to me that the Bill is in direct contradiction of that pledge, because it proceeds to give the surplus to lunatics, deaf mutes, and other fit recipients of a nation's charity. The Prime Minister said in another place that the deaf mutes would get "training and instruction." I now ask whether this "training and instruction" for deaf mutes, which, of course, they are to receive in educational establishments, is to be religious training and instruction; because if it is to be irreligious, I venture to say there will be no desire for it. The Irish people, being only imperfectly civilised, and having some barbarous prejudices in favour of religion, are not anxious for that boon of purely atheistical education which some persons are desirous of having generally adopted in this more civilised and less barbarously prejudiced country, England. If the training and instruction of those deaf mutes is to be religious, it will be given by the priests. If the training and instruction is not to be religious, the ministers of religion will protest against it, and they will be right in so doing. Then, my Lords, I want to know how you are to deal with these institutions—where there is religious instruction there must be chapels and ministers for giving that religious instruction—I want to know how these chapels and ministers are to be maintained without a money payment, that is to say, without applying the surplus funds of the Irish Church towards the payment of ministers and for the teaching of religion. It seems to me, therefore, that this Bill, by proposing to appropriate these funds to religious teaching, violates the verdict of the nation; and that having

in its Preamble declared that nothing shall be given to religious instruction, it does proceed to apply the surplus funds of the Irish Church to the purposes of religious instruction.

And now, my Lords, I have to conclude an address which I am certain has extended to an exceedingly wearisome length, and I cannot sufficiently thank your Lordships for the very generous kindness and patience with which you have listened to me. I am afraid that what I had to say was unacceptable to many of your Lordships, and to these noble Lords I must especially tender my thanks for the courtesy they have extended to me.

My Lords, I have but one or two more words to say. I will say but a few words, my Lords, about the menaces and the warnings—the mixed menaces and warnings—which have been addressed to your Lordships' House by many without and so far, at least, as warning is concerned, by some within. My Lords, I myself have been told that I should be very heedful of the way in which I may vote on this question, because none may say what will be the consequences to your Lordships' House—to the fate of your Lordships' Order, and to the great interests of the country—of the vote you are about to give. My Lords, as far as menaces go, I do not think that it is necessary that I should say one word by way of inducing your Lordships, even if I could hope to induce you to do anything by words of mine, to resist those menaces. I believe that not merely the spirit of your Lordships, but your Lordships' high sense of the duty you owe to the country, would lead you to resist any such intolerant and overbearing menaces as those which have been uttered towards you. I believe that if any one of your Lordships were capable of yielding to those menaces you would be possessed of sufficient intelligence to know how utterly useless any such humiliation would be in the way of prolonging your Lordships' existence as an institution—because it would be exactly the case of those who, for the sake of preserving life, lose all that makes life worth living—it would be an abnegation of all your Lordships' duties for the purpose of preserving those powers which a few years hence would be taken from you. Your Lordships would then be standing in this position in the face of the roused and angry democracy of the country, with which you have been so loudly menaced out-of-doors, and so gently and tenderly warned

within. You would then be standing in the face of that fierce and angry democracy with these words on your lips: "Spare us, we entreat and beseech you! Spare us to live a little longer as an Order is all that we ask, so that we may play at being statesmen, that we may sit upon red benches in a gilded house, and affect and pretend to guide the destinies of the nation and play at legislation. Spare us, for this reason —that we are utterly contemptible, and that we are entirely contented with our ignoble position! Spare us, for this reason —that we have never failed in any case of danger to spare ourselves! Spare us, because we have lost the power to hurt anyone! Spare us, because we have now become the mere subservient tools in the hands of the Minister of the day, the mere armorial bearings on the seal that he may take in his hands to stamp any deed, however foolish and however mischievous! And this is all we have to say by way of plea for the continuance of our Order." My Lords, I do not believe there is a Peer in your Lordships' House, or anyone who is worthy of finding a place in it, who could use such language or think such thoughts; and, therefore, I will put aside all the menaces to which I have referred. For myself, and as regards my own vote, if I were to allow myself to give a thought to consequences, much might be said as to the consequences of your Lordships' vote to your Lordships' House, and to the Church which I so dearly love; and I, a young member of your Lordships' House, fully understand the gravity of the course I am about to adopt, and the serious consequences that may attach to that vote; but, on the other hand, I feel that I have no choice in the matter—that I dare not allow myself a choice as to the vote that I must give upon this measure. My Lords, I hear a great deal about the verdict of the nation on this question; but, without presuming to judge the conscience or the wisdom of others, and speaking wholly and entirely for myself, I desire to remember—and I cannot help remembering—this, that there are other and more distant verdicts than the verdict even of this nation, and of this moment, which everyone of us must face at one time or another, and which I myself am thinking of while I am speaking and in determining upon the vote I am about to give. There is the verdict of the English nation in its calmer hours—when it may have recovered from its fear and its panic, and when it may be

disposed to judge those who too hastily yielded to its passions; there is the verdict of after history, which we are making even as we speak and act in this place, and which is hereafter to judge us for our speeches and for our deeds; and, my Lords, there is the other more solemn and more awful verdict which we shall have to face; and I feel that I shall be then judged not for the consequences of my having made a mistake, but for the spirit in which I have acted, and for the purposes with which I have acted. And, my Lords, as I think of the hour in which I must face that verdict, I dare not—I cannot—I must not—and I will not—vote for this most unhappy, this most ill-tried, this most ill-omened measure that now lies on the table of your Lordships' House.

CHARLES STEWART PARNELL

PARNELL was a striking example of a man who succeeded in the conflict of public life without any natural gift of eloquence, or even of fluency. When he first came as a young man into the House of Commons, he was a hesitating, indeed a bungling, speaker. But he gradually overcame his deficiencies, and was recognised as a master of precise statement, always saying what he meant to say, neither more nor less. He is a rare, perhaps a solitary, instance of successful endeavour to acquire the art of speech by sheer energy and determination. To select from his speeches is difficult, because they all belong entirely to the circumstances of the day. But it may be doubted whether he made at any time or in any place a more thoroughly characteristic effort than his speech on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill in 1886. He understood Irish politics so well that he could treat them from above, taking a comprehensive view, and at the same time neglect nothing which was required to give a consistent estimate of the whole. The secret of his power was that he knew exactly what he wanted, and could always accommodate means to ends by combining persuasive argument with lucid exposition. But this was not the result of any original or innate facility. Parnell worked hard at the drudgery of fitting words with facts. He left nothing to chance. He never trusted to extemporaneous inspiration. Nor, on the other hand, was he a coiner of happy phrases. What he could do was to express neatly, clearly, and tersely, the exact meaning he wished to convey. Parnell's power of controlling both himself and others was innate and remarkable. In that sense, and to that extent, his speeches were acts. His range indeed was limited. He was not a spectator nor an idealist, and he had no skill in comparative politics. But his intelligence was both wide and

clear. He knew the object at which he aimed, and understood the means by which he sought to attain it. He discovered how to use the House of Commons for the purposes of his own policy, and how to impress his audience with a lucid idea of the scheme he was endeavouring to set up. He never spoke as if he were appealing to passion or prejudice. Cold, dry reason always seemed to be the foundation upon which he relied. The "blind hysterics of the Celt" were as remote from his methods and temperament as anything that could well be conceived. He could be persuasive, or he could be defiant. He was never impulsive, or erratic. He was essentially a leader, and he spoke with the authority which springs from the assured consciousness of strength.

The First Home Rule Bill

June 7th, 1886

If, Mr. Speaker, I intervene in the contest of giants which has been proceeding for so many days in this House in reference to this great question, it is not because I suppose that that intervention is specially suitable to the moment; and I certainly should not, under ordinary circumstances, have felt any self-confidence whatever in following so able and eloquent a member of this House as the right honourable gentleman the member for the Eastern Division of Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen). But "Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just"; and even a man so inferior from every point of view to the right honourable gentleman as I am may hope upon this occasion not to be so much behind him as usual. Sir, without intending to offer any disrespect to the right honourable gentleman, I must say that I could not help thinking, when listening to his speech, that in all the lost causes which I have seen him attempting to defend during many years past he was never so little effective as when contending against the Bill which we hope to see read a second time to-night. The right honourable gentleman has sought—I think very unfairly—to cast a lurid light upon the situation by an allusion to those unhappy outrages which have occurred in Kerry. I join the right honourable gentleman

in expressing my contempt for these cowardly and disgraceful practices. I join him in that respect to the fullest extent. Neither do I say that because for months past evictions have been more numerous in Kerry than in all the rest of Munster taken together—neither do I say that that constitutes any excuse for these outrages, although it may supply us with a reason for them; but when I denounce outrages I denounce them in all parts of Ireland, whether they occur in Ulster or in Kerry. The right honourable gentleman himself is certainly free from reproach in this matter. He has not joined the noble Lord the member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) and the right honourable gentleman the member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) in the use of reckless language with reference to the affairs of a country which is not their country, for the use of which language they had not even the paltry excuse that the subject was any business of theirs, or that they really felt any interest in it. My colleagues have been reproached, some of them, in times past, because they have not been very careful to look into what might be the effect of their language, and the doctrine of indirect responsibility has been employed against many of them to the length of imprisonment. But if the doctrine of indirect responsibility had been employed against the noble Lord and the right honourable gentleman the member for West Birmingham, the former of them might, perhaps, have pleaded as an excuse that as he believes in nothing and in nobody except himself, so he could not expect any great importance to be attached to his declarations; while the right honourable gentleman the member for West Birmingham might have said, and very truly, that he was absolutely ignorant of all the circumstances of Ireland, his celebrated projected visit to that country last autumn not having come off, and that consequently he really did not know what would be the probable result of his language. However, Sir, we have the result now in one murder which has already been committed in Belfast. I trust that in future right honourable gentlemen will remember that the importance and gravity of the occurrences which may follow in Ulster—and these occurrences cannot well go further than outrage and assassination—will depend very much upon what they say and upon the meaning which their words may convey to the minds of Ulster

men. But certainly I do condemn these outrages in Kerry; and the right honourable gentleman says very rightly that they must be put a stop to. Well, so say we all; but the right honourable gentleman would try to put a stop to them by resorting to the old bad method of coercion, which he and his friends have been using for the last eighty-six years, while we say with the Prime Minister—" Try the effect of self-government "; and if Kerry men then resort to outrages they will very soon find that the rest of Ireland will put a stop to them. With reference to the terrible occurrence in Belfast, I wish to give an explanation, because, as usual, the English newspapers have perverted for their own purposes what actually took place. I was very much pained at reading that it was alleged that the disturbance arose out of an expression addressed by a Catholic workman to a Protestant fellow-workman, to the effect that in a short time none of his religious persuasion would be allowed to earn a crust of bread in Ireland. Now, that does not represent the circumstances of the occurrence as they are reported in the local newspapers. What really took place was this. The Catholic overseer of the works found fault with the way in which an Orangeman—I think he was an Orange workman; at all events, he was a Protestant workman—was executing the digging out of a drain. The overseer said to the workman—" That is a nice way to dig this drain," and the Orangeman replied—the overseer happened to be a Catholic—" What does a Papist know about digging drains ? " The overseer, being irritated—I will not say justly irritated, because it was absurd of him to be irritated by such a remark—said, in reply, " You will never earn a crust in these works again," meaning that the workman would be dismissed. " That is all right; that is all I want," said the Orangeman, and he took up his shovel and left the works, and I believe that while leaving he was assaulted by one or more of the Catholic workmen. It is necessary to point out—so difficult is it to know here what is true with regard to any Irish matter—it is very important that the House should understand that the overseer's remark had not a general, but an individual, application. At the same time, I am not to be taken as justifying, in the slightest degree, the conduct of Catholics employed in the yard. Now, Sir, the right honourable member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) spoke about the sovereignty

of Parliament. I entirely agree upon this point. I entirely accept the definitions given by the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) the other day. We have always known since the introduction of this Bill the difference between a co-ordinate and a sub-ordinate Parliament, and we have recognised that the Legislature which the Prime Minister proposes to constitute is a subordinate Parliament—that it is not the same as Grattan's Parliament, which was co-equal with the Imperial Parliament, arising out of the same constitution given to the Irish people by the Crown, just in the same way, though not by the same means, as Parliamentary Institutions were given to Great Britain by the Sovereign. We understand this perfectly well. Undoubtedly, I should have preferred—as I stated in speeches which have been quoted against me as showing that I could not accept this proposed settlement as final—I should have preferred the restitution of Grattan's Parliament; it would have been more in accordance with the sentiments of the Irish people, whose sentiments in such matters it is most important to regard. But with reference to the argument that has been used against us, that I am precluded from accepting this solution as a final solution because I have claimed the restitution of Grattan's Parliament, I would beg to say that I consider there are practical advantages connected with the proposed statutory body, limited and subordinate to this Imperial Parliament as it undoubtedly will be, which will render it much more useful and advantageous to the Irish people than was Grattan's Parliament, and that the statutory body, which the right honourable gentleman proposes to constitute, is much more likely to be a final settlement than Grattan's Parliament. That Parliament had many disadvantages. In the first place it had a House of Lords. Well, we get rid of the House of Lords by the Constitution of the right honourable gentleman. It is true that in its place is put the First Order; a very salutary provision, although I do not agree entirely as to the extent of time for which the First Order is allowed to hang up a Bill, or as to some of the qualifications for it. But these are subordinate matters. I say, then, that the First Order is a very salutary provision, one that will tend to prevent rash legislation and intemperate action; and as to the power of the First Order to hang up a Bill, I would rather see a measure hung up for

ten years by such a body, than hung up for only twenty-four hours by this Imperial Parliament. I venture to express that opinion, having regard to the irritation which such constant action by the Imperial Parliament, such constant meddling and overthrowing on the part of this Imperial Parliament, as is suggested by the right honourable member for West Birmingham, would have on the minds of the people of Ireland. That would be most mischievous and dangerous, and sure to prevent the settlement being regarded as final. But when we are all assembled together in one chamber, different sections of Irishmen threshing out different subjects, those causes and effects which have always come into operation in similar circumstances will be reproduced in Ireland also, and discussion will be relied upon for bringing about a settlement of disputed questions, which we, of course, have, like other people, and the result of these two Orders working together will be that those questions will be decided on a basis of compromise more or less satisfactory to both parties. We feel, therefore, that under this Bill this Imperial Parliament will have the ultimate supremacy and the ultimate sovereignty. I have already said that under this Bill the House of Lords of Grattan's Parliament will not be revived; but there is another great difference between Grattan's Parliament and the Legislature to be established by this Bill—namely, that in Grattan's Parliament the executive was divorced from the Legislative body, whereas the two bodies will be united under this Bill. I think it was Fox who said that there could be no perfect system of government in which the executive and the legislative bodies were not joined together. In that observation I quite agree, and I think that the most useful part of the Bill is that in which the Prime Minister throws the responsibility upon the new Legislature of maintaining that order in Ireland without which no state and no society can exist. I understand the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament to be this—that they can interfere in the event of the powers which are conferred by this Bill being abused under certain circumstances. But the Nationalists, in accepting this Bill, go, as I think, under an honourable undertaking not to abuse those powers; and we pledge ourselves in that respect for the Irish people, as far as we can pledge ourselves, not to abuse those powers, and to devote our energies and any influence which we may have

with the Irish people to prevent those powers from being abused. But, if those powers should be abused, the Imperial Parliament will have at its command the force which it reserves to itself, and it will be ready to intervene, but only in the case of grave necessity arising. I believe that this is by far the best mode in which we can hope to settle this question. You will have the real power of force in your hands, and you ought to have it, and if abuses be committed and injustices be perpetrated, you will always be able to use that force to put a stop to them. You will have the power and the supremacy of Parliament untouched and unimpaired, just as though this Bill had never been brought forward. We fully recognise this to be the effect of the Bill. I now repeat what I have already said on the first reading of the measure, immediately after I heard the statement of the Prime Minister, that we look upon the provisions of the Bill as a final settlement of this question, and that I believe that the Irish people have accepted it as such a settlement. Of course you may not believe me, but I can say no more. I think my words upon that occasion have been singularly justified by the result. We have had this measure accepted in the sense I have indicated by all the leaders of every section of national opinion both in Ireland and outside Ireland. It has been so accepted in the United States of America, and by the Irish population in that country with whose vengeance some honourable members are so fond of threatening us. Not a single dissentient voice has been raised against this Bill by any Irishman—not by any Irishman holding national opinions—and I need scarcely remind the House that there are sections among Irish Nationalists just as much as there are even among the great Conservative party. I say that as far as it is possible for a nation to accept a measure cheerfully, freely, gladly, and without reservation as a final settlement, I say that the Irish people have shown that they have accepted this measure in that sense. Even the terrible *Irish World*, which has not been upon my side for the last five or six years, says—

> The Irish race at home and abroad have signified a willingness to accept the terms of peace offered by Mr. Gladstone.

And it goes on to say that—

> If a Coercion Bill were now passed by Parliament, it would be equivalent to a declaration of war on the part of England.

I need scarcely say that we have not agreed with Mr. Patrick Ford during the last five or six years. We strongly condemn his proposals, and he returns the compliment by not agreeing with us, so that the honours are pretty easy; but I take his testimony upon this point—that as far as the Irish people at home and in America can accept this Bill, they have done so without any reservation whatever in a final sense. I will now leave this question of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, and I will turn to one that was strongly dwelt upon by the right honourable gentleman the member for East Edinburgh—I mean the influence which he fears the Irish priesthood will seek to exercise upon the future education of the Irish people. The right honourable gentleman certainly has not followed the example of other illustrious persons by indulging in extravagant language on the Protestant and Catholic question, and I may say at once that I am quite sure that the right honourable gentleman's apprehensions upon this subject are genuine, so far as they go, and that at the same time he has no desire to fan the flame of religious discord. On the whole, I think that the right honourable gentleman has spoken very fairly in reference to this part of the question: and I will not say that, perhaps as a Protestant, had I not had, as I have had, abundant experience of Ireland, I might not have been inclined to share his fears myself. Certainly, I have no such fears; but it is rather remarkable that this question of education is the only matter the right honourable gentleman has any fears about in dealing with the question of Protestant and Catholic in Ireland. There is, however, a further remarkable fact that in reference to this branch of the question the right honourable gentleman the member for West Birmingham has actually proposed to give the entire control of Irish education to a central council sitting in Dublin, without any reservation whatever as regards Ulster or the Irish Protestant population. I believe in that scheme, also, that there was to be a First and Second Order. Sir, it is very hard to please everybody, and while we please the right honourable member for West Birmingham by agreeing to give the control of Irish education to a legislative body which will include the representatives of the Protestants of Ulster, we find that we are unfortunately running foul of the right honourable member for East Edinburgh. I can, however, assure the

latter right honourable gentleman that we Irishmen shall be able to settle this question of Irish education very well among ourselves. There are many Liberal Nationalists in Ireland—I call them Liberal Nationalists because I take the phrase in reference to this question of education—there are many Liberal Nationalists who do not altogether share the views of the Roman Catholic Church upon the subject of education, and they are anxious that Ulster should remain an integral part of Ireland in order that they may share the responsibility of government and may influence that government by the feelings which they have with regard to this question of education. You may depend upon it that in an Irish Legislature Ulster, with such representatives as she now has in the Imperial Parliament, would be able successfully to resist the realisation of any idea which the Roman Catholic hierarchy might entertain with regard to obtaining an undue control of Irish education. But I repeat that we shall be able to settle this question and others very satisfactorily to all the parties concerned among ourselves. I may, however, remind the House that things are going on in this House with reference to denominational education which would undoubtedly result in denominational education being conceded to Ireland within a very few years without any effective control over it being given to the Ulster Protestants. Mention has been made by the right honourable gentleman the member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) of the linen trade of Ireland, and some correspondence on the subject has been read. I think, however, the right honourable gentleman was rather unfair to my honourable friend the member for Dublin (Mr. Gray). I have not had the advantage of reading the correspondence; but the part of it which the right honourable gentleman quoted to prove that the linen trade was the curse of Ulster was one passage out of many letters intended to prove that the linen trade of Ireland had been a curse to Ulster, as it had been the means, not perhaps directly, but indirectly, of enabling the peasantry to pay the rack rents of the landlords, who otherwise could not have obtained them. I do not think that the right honourable gentleman was fair in seeking to carry the matter further than that; indeed, there did not appear to be an inclination on the part of the right honourable gentleman to carry it very far. I observe that there has been a similar reticence exercised with

regard to the financial question, of which such a point was made upon the first reading of the Bill. The speech of the right honourable gentleman upon the first reading of the Bill undoubtedly produced a great sensation in the House and in this country. The right honourable gentleman, as I and others, and as I believe, the country, understood him, argued on that occasion that Ulster was wealthier than either of the three other provinces, and that, consequently, the burden of taxation would chiefly fall upon her, and that without Ulster, therefore, it would be impossible to carry on the Government of Ireland. The right honourable gentleman did not press the financial question very far to-day; but it would not be improper, perhaps, if we were to direct a little more of our attention to it. For instance, the great wealth of Ulster has been taken up as the war cry of the Loyal and Patriotic Union. The right honourable gentleman was not very fair in choosing the Income Tax, Schedule D, referring to trade and professions, as his standard and measure of the relative wealth of the four provinces. The fair measure of their relative wealth is their assessment to the Income Tax under all the different schedules, and also the value of the rateable property in Ireland; and these tests show conclusively that, so far from Ulster being the wealthiest of the four provinces—and the right honourable gentleman does not deny it now—Ulster comes third in point of relative wealth per head of the population. She comes after Leinster and Munster, and she is only superior to impoverished Connaught. The Income Tax for Leinster shows £10 6s, 9d. per head; Munster, £6 0s. 7d. per head; Ulster, £5 14s. 9d. per head; and Connaught, £3 13s. 7d. per head. These figures will give the relative wealth of the four provinces as ascertained by these, the only fair tests, as 9·92 for Leinster, 5·78 for Munster, 5·49 for Ulster—or a little more than half the relative wealth of Leinster—and 3.52 for Connaught. And if you take any other fair test, the same results will be arrived at, and you will find that Ulster, instead of being first on the list as regards wealth per head, comes a long way third. But the right honourable gentleman also argued that there was a great disparity between the north-eastern or Protestant counties of Ulster and the Catholic counties in point of relative wealth. He chose not the fairest test, but the test

that showed the best results for his argument, and he represented the disparity as a great deal larger than that which actually exists. But, undoubtedly, to a considerable extent, there is this disproportion between the relative wealth of the north-eastern counties of Ulster and the other counties of the province. But that same disproportion exists all through Ireland. The eastern counties are universally the richer counties all over Ireland. If you draw a meridian line down through the centre of the country you will find to the east of that line comparative prosperity, and to the west of it comparative poverty. The reason of this is obvious. In the first place the country becomes rocky and barren as you go west; and, in the second place, its chief trade is with England; and consequently the great distributing centres, the shipping ports, and other places where men of business and wealth congregate and find their living, exist on the eastern sea-board. And it is only natural, not only as regards Ulster, but Munster and Leinster, that the eastern portions of the province are richer than the rest. I next come to the question of the protection of the minority. I have incidentally dwelt on this point in respect to the matter of education; but I should like, with the permission of the House, to say a few words more about it, because it is one on which great attention has been bestowed. One would think that from what we hear the Protestants of Ireland were going to be handed over to the tender mercies of a set of Thugs and bandits. (Hear, hear.) The honourable and gallant member for North Armagh (Major Saunderson) cheers that. I only wish that I was as safe in the North of Ireland when I go there as the honourable and gallant member would be in the South. What do honourable gentlemen mean by the protection of the loyal minority? In the first place, I ask them what they mean by the loyal minority. The right honourable member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) does not seem to have made up his mind, even at this late stage of the discussion, as to what loyal Ulster he means. When asked the question, he said he meant the same loyal Ulster as was referred to by the Prime Minister in his speech; but he would not commit himself by telling us what signification he attributed to the Prime Minister's expression. Well, I have examined the Prime Minister's reference since then, and and I find that he referred to the whole province of Ulster.

He did not select a little bit of the province, because the Opposition had not discovered this point at that time; and consequently I suppose I may assume that the right honourable member for East Edinburgh also referred to the whole province of Ulster when he asked for special protection for it. He has not, however, told us how he would specially protect it. But we may go to other sources to supply the deficiency. It is one of the features of this debate that in order to make up the patchwork of a plan you have to go round to the Opposition speakers and select a bit from one and a bit from another and a bit from a third to frame something like a programme in opposition to the proposal of the Prime Minister, and even then the results are very unsatisfactory. But the right honourable member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) has claimed —and I suppose that the right honourable member for East Edinburgh, when the proper time comes, will support him in that claim—a separate legislature for the province of Ulster. Well, Sir, you would not protect the loyal minority of Ireland even supposing that you got a separate legislature for the province of Ulster, because there are outside the province of Ulster over 400,000 Protestants who would still be without any protection so far as you propose to give them protection. You would make the position of these 400,000 Protestants, by taking away Ulster from them, infinitely less secure. But you would not even protect the Protestants in Ulster, because the Protestants, according to the last census, were in the proportion of fifty-two to forty-eight Catholics; and we have every reason to believe that now the Protestants and Catholics in Ulster are about equal in number. At all events, however that may be, the Nationalists have succeeded in returning the majority of the Ulster members, and consequently we have the Nationalists in a majority in Ulster. The main reason of the balance of forces I believe to be that a large proportion of the Protestant Nationalists voted in the closely divided constituencies of Ulster in favour of my honourable colleagues. So that you would have the Nationalist will to deal with in Ulster, even if Ulster had a separate legislature; and the very first thing that the Ulster legislature would do would be to unite itself with the Dublin Parliament. Well, being driven away from the fiction of Protestant Ulster, and the great majority of Protestants which until recently was alleged to exist in

Ulster, the opponents of this Bill have been compelled to seek refuge in the north-east corner of Ulster, consisting of three counties. Here, again, comes in the difficulty that instead of protecting the majority of the Protestants of Ireland by constituting a legislature for the north-east corner of Ulster, you would abandon the majority of the Protestants of Ireland to their fate under a Dublin Parliament. Seven-twelfths of the Protestants of Ireland live outside these three counties in the north-east corner of Ulster, and the other five-twelfths of the Protestants of Ireland live inside those counties. So that, whichever way you put it, you must give up the idea of protecting the Protestants, either as a body or as a majority, by the establishment of a separate legislature, either in Ulster or in any portion of Ulster. No, Sir, we cannot give up a single Irishman. We want the energy, the patriotism, the talents, and the work of every Irishman to insure that this great experiment shall be a successful one. The best system of government for a country I believe to be one which requires that that government should be the resultant of all the forces within that country. We cannot give away to a second legislature the talents and influence of any portion or section of the Irish people. The class of Protestants will form a most valuable element in the Irish legislature of the future, constituting as they will a strong minority, and exercising through the First Order a moderating influence in making the laws. We have heard of the danger that will result from an untried and unpractised legislature being established in Ireland. Now I regard variety as vitally necessary for the success of this trial. We want, Sir, all creeds and all classes in Ireland. We cannot consent to look upon a single Irishman as not belonging to us. And however much we recognise the great abilities and the industry of the Irish Protestants—and we recognise them freely and fully—we cannot admit that there is a single one of them too good to take part in the Dublin Parliament. We do not blame the small proportion of the Protestants of Ireland who feel any real fear. I admit, Sir, that there is a small proportion of them who do feel this fear. We do not blame them; we have been doing our best to allay that fear, and we shall continue to do so. And, finally, when this Bill becomes an Act, we shall not cease from the work of conciliating the fears of this small section of Irishmen. No, Sir, theirs is

not the shame and disgrace of this fear. That shame and disgrace belong to right honourable gentlemen and noble Lords of English political parties, who, for selfish interests, have sought to rekindle the embers—the almost expiring embers—of religious bigotry. Ireland has never injured the right honourable gentleman the member for West Birmingham. I do not know why he should have added the strength of his powerful arm—why he should, like another Brennus—let us hope not with the same result—why he should have thrown his sword into the scale against Ireland. I am not aware that we have either personally or politically attempted to injure the right honourable gentleman, yet he and his kind seek to dash this cup from the lips of the Irish people—the first cup of cold water that has been offered to our nation since the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. This settlement, Sir, I believe will be a final settlement. I have been reproached—and it has been made an argument against the honesty of my declaration as to the final character of the settlement—that in a speech at Wicklow I claimed the right of protecting the Irish manufacturer, and it is said that this Bill gives no such right. Well, undoubtedly, I claimed that right. But it was not when a Liberal Government was in power. That speech about Protection at Wicklow was made at a time when we had every reason to know that the Conservative party, if they had been successful at the polls, would have offered Ireland a statutory Legislature with a right to protect her own industries, and that this would have been coupled with the settlement of the Irish Land Question on the basis of purchase on a larger scale than that now proposed by the Prime Minister. I never should have thought, I never did think, and I do not think now of claiming Protection from the Liberal party—I never expected it, and, therefore, I recognise the settlement as final without Protection. There is another and stronger argument as well. In introducing this Bill, the Prime Minister showed that unless we have fiscal unity there will be a loss of £1,400,000. I think, therefore, that, as a consequence of fiscal unity, £1,400,000 is a good *quid pro quo* for the loss of Protection. The question of the retention of the Irish members I shall only touch upon very slightly. I have always desired to keep my mind thoroughly open upon it, and not to make it a vital question. There are difficulties; but they are rather more

from the English than the Irish point of view, and I think that when we come to consider the question in committee that feeling will be a growing one on the part of Liberal members. I admit the existence of a strong sentiment in favour of our retention—I will not say it is a reasonable sentiment, when I consider how many times my colleagues and I have been forcibly ejected from this House, how often the necessity of suspending, if not entirely abrogating, representation on the part of Ireland has been eagerly canvassed by the London Press—perhaps I may not, under these circumstances, consider the desire on the part of Liberal members as a very reasonable one. I admit that it is an honest one. All I can say is that when the Prime Minister has produced his plan—and I admit that it is a difficult question, and will require some little time for consideration—when the Prime Minister has produced his plan, without binding myself beforehand, I shall candidly examine it, with a desire not to see in it an element that will injure the permanency of the settlement. I shall chiefly deal with it with a view of seeing whether it will diminish the permanency of the settlement to the success of which my colleagues and I have pledged our political future. But I confess, Sir, that if I had regard to the spirit with which the right honourable gentleman the member for West Birmingham has dealt with this question, I should have been hopelessly alienated from the plan of retaining the Irish members. He has dealt with it in a way to attach an apparent stigma of inferiority to us, and in order that he may have the excuse for constantly meddling in our affairs, checking us, thwarting us, and keeping us under his thumb. The Irish people will never submit to that. We could not agree to his plan, for that would be fatal to the finality and durability of the scheme. Now, Sir, what does it all come to? It comes to two alternatives when everything has been said and everything has been done. One alternative is the coercion which Lord Salisbury put before the country, and the other is the alternative offered by the Prime Minister, carrying with it the lasting settlement of a treaty of peace. If you reject this Bill, Lord Salisbury was quite right in what he said as to coercion. (No, no.) With great respect to the cries of "No," by honourable members above the gangway, I beg to say you will have to resort to coercion. That is not

a threat on my part—I would do much to prevent the necessity for resorting to coercion; but I say it will be inevitable, and the best-intentioned Radical who sits on those benches, and who thinks that he "never, never will be a party to coercion," will be found very soon walking into the Division Lobby in favour of the strongest and most drastic Coercion Bill, or, at the very outside, pitifully abstaining. We have gone through it all before. During the last five years I know, Sir, there have been very severe and drastic Coercion Bills; but it will require an even severer and more drastic measure of coercion now. You will require all that you have had during the last five years, and more besides. What, Sir, has that coercion been? You have had, Sir, during those five years—I do not say this to inflame passion or awaken bitter memories—you have had during those five years the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; you have had a thousand of your Irish fellow-subjects held in prison without specific charge, many of them for long periods of time, some of them for twenty months, without trial, and without any intention of placing them on trial—I think of all these thousand persons arrested under the Coercion Act of the late Mr. Forster, scarcely a dozen were put on their trial; you have had the Arms Acts; you have had the suspension of trial by jury—all during the last five years. You have authorised your police to enter the domicile of a citizen, of your fellow-subject in Ireland, at any hour of the day or night, and to search every part of his domicile, even the beds of the women, without warrant. You have fined the innocent for offences committed by the guilty; you have taken power to expel aliens from this country; you have revived the Curfew Law and the blood money of your Norman conquerors; you have gagged the Press and seized and suppressed newspapers; you have manufactured new crimes and offences, and applied fresh penalties unknown to your laws for these crimes and offences. All this you have done for five years, and all this, and much more, you will have to do again. The provision in the Bill for terminating the representation of Irish members has been very vehemently objected to, and the right honourable gentleman the member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) has said that there is no half-way house between separation and the maintenance of law and order in Ireland by Imperial authority. I say, with just as much sincerity

of belief, and just as much experience as the right honourable gentleman, that, in my judgment, there is no half-way house between the concession of legislative autonomy to Ireland and the disfranchisement of the country and her government as a Crown Colony. But, Sir, I refuse to believe that these evil days must come. I am convinced that there are a sufficient number of wise and just members in this House to cause it to disregard appeals made to passion and to pocket, and to choose the better way of the Prime Minister—the way of founding peace and goodwill among nations; and when the numbers in the Division Lobby come to be told it will also be told for the admiration of all future generations, that England and her Parliament, in this nineteenth century, was wise enough, brave enough, and generous enough to close the strife of centuries, and to give peace, prosperity, and happiness to suffering Ireland.

MR. GLADSTONE

MR. GLADSTONE took office in 1868 for the express purpose of dealing with the Irish Question by the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church. The speech printed in this volume, his reply in the debate on the second reading of the Irish Church Bill, is an appropriate example of his eloquence, and characteristic of his powers in dealing with points raised by opponents during the course of discussion. No one in English politics was better able than Mr. Gladstone to combine a thorough mastery of his subject with an illustration of general principles, and a steadfast adherence to the main purposes of his policy. In this speech it will be found that there is a studious avoidance of controversial questions not essential to the argument, and at the same time an exhaustive treatment of all serious arguments against the Bill.

REPLY ON THE SECOND READING OF THE IRISH CHURCH BILL—1869

MR. GLADSTONE :—Mr. Speaker, I think, Sir, that both sides of the House must be agreed at least in this—that the right honourable gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Disraeli), has drawn a picture of the state of Ireland which is equally remarkable and deplorable. The right honourable gentleman's picture consists of two parts. On the one side he looks at the system of law, government, and institutions in Ireland, and there all is well. On the other hand, he looks at the people of Ireland—at the religion of the people, at the relations between the people of Ireland and the ministers of their religion, and there, unfortunately, all is ill. Mr. Burke said, in one of his memorable compositions, that he did not know how to bring an indictment against a nation. For bringing an indictment against a nation commend me to the right honourable gentleman. Irish grievances—where are they? The right honourable gentleman says he looks in vain for the grievances of Ireland. On the state of land tenure the right honourable gentleman has nothing to say, except to indulge in criticisms on the language

of my right honourable friend the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Bright). With regard to the Established Church of Ireland, though theoretically it may involve some departure from religious equality, has he not proved to us that it is a great blessing to that country? Has he not told us, grossly, as I think, though no doubt unintentionally, misinterpreting the terms used by a Judge, that in Ireland there are no wrongs unredressed? And yet, what does he complain of? Of the wholesale sympathy on the part of the great part of the population with Fenian agitators and criminals. Of sympathy, not only with political, but with private, crime; and in the relations between the people and their clergy the right honourable gentleman can see nothing but influence misused. This is the state of things which he depicts as existing in Ireland; and I ask him, where are his remedies? The picture which he presents to us is, so far as the Irish people are concerned, nothing but a picture of black despair. He speaks of promoting the repeal of the Union, and because some clergyman in Ireland, dignified, it appears by the title of Archdeacon, has lately become a Repealer, the right honourable gentleman, searching for the cause of this strange opinion, thinks it can be found nowhere except in a line and a half of a speech delivered by myself some thirty-three years ago. There are, however, I would remind him, other modes of promoting a repeal of the Union, and of these no mode is so cogent in its effect in tending to bring about what I, for one, must regard as so deplorable a result, as that which is made use of by an English statesman who gives us such highly coloured statements with respect to the condition of the Irish people, as to the origin of which he has, it seems to me, furnished us with a most inaccurate account. By leaving on record his charges against the Irish people with his vindication of the Government and laws of this country, he does, I cannot help feeling, all that in him lies to drive that people to despair. The right honourable gentleman reminds us that the Fenians have not asked for the abolition of the Church in Ireland. No, that is very true; so far as that goes, the Fenians and the right honourable gentleman are exactly in the same position. ("Oh!") In precisely the same position, I was about to say, with respect to that demand. I hope I was not understood as imputing it to the right honourable gentleman for a

moment that he does not support the Irish Church Establishment from the most honourable and conscientious, though I think, mistaken motives. The Fenians, differing from him entirely in their views with respect to that Church, are the very last persons to demand its abolition, because it serves their purpose that it should remain as it now stands. Whatever serves to estrange the minds of the Irish population from Imperial rule, from British sympathies, and from their Protestant fellow-countrymen on both sides of the water, is of all things the most precious part of the Fenian stock-in-trade, and it would ill suit their purpose indeed to ask to have the Church in Ireland abolished. The right honourable gentleman at the commencement of his speech vindicated, as I thought, with perfect propriety, his right to overlook, that is, to go beyond, the occurrences of the last twelve or fifteen months, to argue this question as if it were a new question, as if there had been no vote of the last Parliament, as if there had been no declaration of the national conviction at the election, as if there had been no resignation of the late Government, no abandonment of office by the right honourable gentleman himself without soliciting the judgment of the House of Commons, because the opinions and principles on which he sought to govern Ireland, and which he has set forth with great force to-night, were opinions and principles which he knew could not be accepted by the country. I might, indeed, say, as far as the right honourable gentleman is concerned, it appears, after all, that the appeal made the other night by my right honourable friend the President of the Board of Trade was utterly vain—for, with respect to the right honourable gentleman, there is no Irish crisis, and there is no Irish question. All he says we want is a few years of peaceful industry, as though peaceful industry can be adopted at a moment's notice by a whole people, or else, if not so adopted, the entire responsibility for the want of it, and for the evils that may ensue, rests with that people itself, and in no respect with those under whose tutelage, under whose care, and under whose government that people has been for the last six hundred years. Upon this point the right honourable gentleman has materially retrograded. For him there is no Irish question now, but surely there was an Irish question last year when he was a member of a Cabinet sitting upon

this Bench, and heard in silence the speech of Lord Mayo, also a member of the Cabinet, in which Lord Mayo asserted the gravity of this Irish question, and did not tell us we were to bring home to the door of the Irish peasant, and there leave, the whole charge of the evils and mischief with which Ireland teems. Surely there was an Irish question when the right honourable gentleman heard Lord Mayo tell us that he thought the state of the land question so grave that he should introduce a Bill on the following Monday—though, unfortunately, we never saw the Bill—giving to Irish tenants compensation for their improvements, and when, with respect to education, he told us that the time was come when it would be well to found a Roman Catholic University, supported from the Consolidated Fund; and when thirdly, with respect to the Church question, so far from seeing that happy, beneficent state of things which the right honourable gentleman delights to contemplate, he said that there were serious evils, that the absence of religious equality was a grievance, and that there would be no objection to remove that grievance and that religious inequality, provided it were done by the endowment of new Churches and not by the disendowment of old ones. I am sorry to remind the right honourable gentleman in this somewhat pointed manner of the difference in his conduct now, when he is loosened from the trammels of office and enjoys the freedom of Opposition. The right honourable gentleman, having recovered his freedom, makes a very liberal use of it, for he seems to think he has nothing to do but to state that if there have been any evils connected with the people of Ireland, they have been removed long ago, and that it is invidious to lead us to believe that any of the evils remain, and further that if, in fact, there are any evils remaining, no part of the responsibility rests with us, and that the whole responsibility is upon the shoulders of the people of Ireland and of her clergy. Our situation, certainly, is broadly different from that of the right honourable gentleman. He draws this hopeless picture, and for it he does not offer even the shadow of a remedy; but he hinted that he had a right to assume that some measure would pass to put the Church Establishment in Ireland in a satisfactory condition. If I may say so without offence, I think that this is a most audacious assumption to be made by a public man. Not to

cite any measure, carefully to avoid identifying himself with its provisions, in no way explaining the propositions which he would have brought forward, making himself responsible for nothing, not having said so much as this—that evils of any kind would have been redressed by it, the right honourable gentleman thinks that he is entitled to assume that a measure has been imagined and invented, which, if he has imagined and invented it, he takes care not to describe, and that having been so imagined and invented it would have been passed into a law, and that it would have had an operation which would be for the purposes of his argument and for those purposes alone. I think that I am justified in saying that the right honourable gentleman offers us nothing. He has presented to us a sad and grievous picture; but I think it is so unjust to the people of Ireland as to amount to a libel on their character. He has nothing to suggest or promise by way of producing a better state of things beyond that salutary precept that he inculcates, that habits of industry, and a uniform regard for the laws should be adopted by the people. Our position is very different. We do not see in the state of Ireland anything but the aggravated result of the inveterate mischiefs which raged with fury in these islands until within the last generation, and which, though abated in many and important respects, have left behind so much of painful and angry recollections, and so much also of actual difficulty and suffering and grievance, while as yet no sufficient attempt has been made to apply a remedy, that we have had reason to regard the condition of Ireland as a problem beyond our powers to solve. We have, of course, as the people of Ireland have, to lament, and as everyone has to lament in himself, the corruptions, the impurities, and the weaknesses of human nature; but those imperfections have been found in equal proportion in their rulers, and it is an axiom in politics that where these inveterate mischiefs prevail, and have prevailed for centuries, the final judgment of posterity, and the sentence of just men will be that the chief responsibility lies where the chief power has been—with the rulers of the country, and with the classes possessing property in it. We, therefore, Sir, attempt to propose a remedy, and that remedy the right honourable gentleman knows must be proposed piecemeal. We cannot lay upon the table at one and the same moment all the

measures for which the state of Ireland appears to us to call. We come forward, therefore, with a Bill for the purpose of disestablishing and disendowing the now Established Church of Ireland. Of course, it was to be expected that the right honourable gentleman would be merciless and unsparing in his criticisms on the details of the Bill. I am sorry it has not been better understood. He complains, for example—and that was the main head of his complaint—that the annuities we offer to incumbents are accompanied with conditions of service. Has he inquired of his friends in the Irish Church whether they would have liked that those annuities should be absolutely given? No, Sir, he has not; at least I will venture to say he knows not the sentiment in the Irish Church on the subject. But it has been our duty to make inquiry into the matter, and the truth is that, consistently with the very sentiments expressed by the right honourable gentleman near me, and which the right honourable gentleman opposite thinks we have abjured, we do attach conditions of service to the annuities of incumbents for the sake of their congregations—yes, for the sake of their congregations, who, we thought, had a right to retain the benefit of their labours, and for the sake of the religious body with which they are connected, and we think that if we had proposed these annuities without conditions, and knowing that to be the general opinion, we should have done much to disorganise and possibly to destroy. But if the right honourable gentleman opposite wishes to bring this particular matter to a test, let him give notice of an Amendment in Committee to substitute for the proposition we make, an unconditional, instead of a conditional annuity, and I venture to say he will find himself mistaken as to the result. [Mr. Gathorne Hardy: You do not let the incumbent take other preferment.] I say he can take other preferment in concert with the authorities of his Church. Without any interference from us to settle with the authorities of his Church the terms of his commutation he may retain his right under it to the end, and take any preferment he likes. I, therefore, challenge the right honourable gentleman to give notice of the Amendment at which he has glanced, when we shall see what left-handed service he has been endeavouring to give to his friends in the Irish Church, in whom he, no doubt,

takes a great interest. The House may be assured that I shall not follow the right honourable gentleman in detail over the extensive ground he has traversed in his able speech. I think that, so far as criticism on the details are concerned, there are none of them on which the opinion we are to give to-night can possibly depend, and, therefore, it is better to let them pass by in the fewest words. I will only say that I think when we come into Committee it will not be found practicable to induce the House to see, as he sees, that in the £350,000 or £400,000—it is somewhere between the two—which the 4,500,000 of Roman Catholics in Ireland may get out of this arrangement, there is any monstrous or undue favouritism, while the £6,500,000, besides the churches and glebe houses, may go to the ministers or servants of the Church, or the body representing it. There is nothing to be read, according to him, but the evidence of our harshness and injustice. With regard to the disputed question of the date of the private endowments of 1660, I know very well that this is a matter on which much may be said *pro* and *con*. But I own to my belief that if the opponents of this Bill succeed in shaking the conviction I entertain with regard to the propriety of the choice of that epoch, I, for one, am more likely to be shaken in the sense of doubting whether we ought to go so far back than in the sense of raising the question of being driven back farther. ("No, no.") I may claim to know something of the matter when I am stating what are likely to be the processes of my own mind. I am not so audacious as to assume that the processes of the minds of honourable gentlemen opposite may sympathise with my own. Several gentlemen said that it would be extremely unjust to charge the Maynooth compensation and the *Regium Donum* upon the Church Fund of Ireland rather than upon the Consolidated Fund of this country. It has also been said that the proceeding we have adopted is not in conformity with the pledges we have given, and some have said, I think, with the Preamble of the Bill. At the proper time, we shall be able to show that this proceeding is in strict conformity with all the words that we have spoken, and with the Preamble of the Bill. Neither of these things, perhaps, much affects the merits of the question; but upon the merits we shall state to the House at the proper time the reasons—and I think they are sufficient and

conclusive reasons—which have led us to propose that these compensations should be paid out of the Church Fund of Ireland. Without in any manner raising a prejudice to the question which the Irish members may think fit to found on the subject of a claim on the Consolidated Fund, or any other claim of a financial kind on behalf of that country, that is not one of the corner-stones of the Bill. I do think that justice requires us to hold firmly—subject always to consideration of mere detail—by the moderate compensation we propose for Roman Catholics and Presbyterians; but as regards the question of the source from which those compensations are to be derived, there is no such foregone conclusion, I presume to say, in the minds of the Government as to prevent the fairest and freest discussion of the question.

So much for the criticism upon our plan in its details. What is far more important is to consider what are the plans or methods, if any, that have been placed in competition with the plan of the Government as the best method of dealing with the great ecclesiastical difficulty of Ireland. And I have shown that the right honourable gentleman who has just sat down has no method whatever. Nor can I fail to remark one most extraordinary circumstance. It will be remembered that upon every occasion, during the debates of last year, our conduct in proposing resolutions and legislation with respect to the Irish Church was denounced by gentlemen opposite not only as unwise, but as eminently factious. And what was the reason adduced in proof that our conduct was thus factious? It was this—that the question of the Irish Church had been referred to a Royal Commission, that the Commission was to produce a plan for its settlement, and we, without waiting for their plan, insisted upon propositions of our own. That was the proof of the factious character of our conduct. At different times during the session—when, I suppose, it was thought expedient in connection with the progress of debate—hopes were held out that the Commission was very hard at work and likely to report—I remember the Home Secretary promising—almost immediately. However, we were not drawn off from the track; and I am thankful to say we went on with our work and performed it, as to all that depended upon us, giving thereby to the country those pledges of the reality and solidity of our intentions which enabled the

country to meet us in a corresponding spirit, resulting in that manifestation of the national will of which we are to look for another sign in the division of to-night. The Report of the Commission has appeared. No doubt, every gentleman on that side has read not only the Report, but the whole of the Schedules. They must, every one of them, be intimately acquainted with it, and yet not a man in this debate has ventured to set up a mode of dealing with the Church question of Ireland on the plan proposed by the Report of the Commission. Surely that is a fact remarkable in itself; but it is more remarkable still when you consider whom you have got in the House—not the official head of the Commission, but its working mind. Great injustice is done to the right honourable and learned gentleman, the member for Dublin University (Dr. Ball) if he is not the father of that Report. And yet, with a total absence of parental feeling, he delivers, for two hours, a speech of the utmost ability and learning in this House, going over everything, condemning on this side, approving on that, having a word to say for all things and for everybody, except for the Report of his own Commission. Really, Sir, if it were possible for an inanimate production to be conscious of that sort of compassion which we ought to bestow on the woes and miseries of a fellow-creature, I should feel it all for the Report of this Commission. Ushered into the world with promisings and trumpetings sufficient for a Royal birth—the period for the preparation of its entering into light equal to that taken by the longest-lived animals in the business of gestation—it was considered by every member of the great party then constituting the Government to be certain to contain in itself the means of solving this most difficult problem; then to issue forth, and to be brought into the light, to be treated worse than the child of a beggar woman, for even such a child would be looked after by the parish—this Report seems to be put behind the fire, and the act of murder is performed by the hands of the father. The Report of the Commission, however, would not have attracted this kind of criticism for the purpose of attempting to fix anything in the nature of ridicule upon the labours of the persons who composed that Commission. They have failed, and failed egregiously, not from their own fault, but because they undertook a hopeless problem. They undertook the task of reforming that which is irreformable—that

which you cannot reform in one sense without worsening its case in, perhaps, twenty other senses. If they committed an error, it was in undertaking to examine the question of reconstructing an institution like the Established Church in Ireland, that has entirely outlived its day. It had outlived its day, in my opinion, when it became evident that the plans of Queen Elizabeth could not possibly be fulfilled for the conversion of the people of Ireland to the Protestant religion. They may have erred in this respect. But I refer to this Report because the plans it has proposed represent to us the utmost and the best that the ablest men can do, fortified with Government authority, having the advantage of a lengthened period of time for consideration, and unbroken consultation; and when such a Report as this proceeds from such men as these, and is so treated by its parents, I say we are justified, if ever there was a negative demonstration in the world, in saying that the time has come when every man standing on this floor is entitled and bound to say that what is called the reform of the Church of Ireland, by cutting and clipping and paring, by taking away a little here, and putting in a little there, and shifting money from one part of the country to another, has become utterly hopeless, and ought to be discarded from the category of those objects which are to be taken into the view of practical politicians. The right honourable and learned gentleman, I must say, I think, treated the Report more favourably than the right honourable gentleman who has just sat down, for he did point out methods of proceeding in Ireland. The right honourable gentleman disclaimed any intention of offering any disrespect to the Roman Catholics in Ireland. I accept that disclaimer in good part—it was most sincerely offered, and not only offered, but proved; because the right honourable gentleman, instead of that niggardly line of comment, so to call it, which has been adopted by the right honourable gentleman, the late Home Secretary (Mr. Gathorne Hardy), who thinks he can possibly scrape two or three years from the Maynooth compensation, commented not only in a different, but in a contradictory, sense, and said that the proposal in respect of Maynooth was insufficient and ungenerous. The right honourable gentleman announced pretty distinctly a mode of dealing with the Church question in Ireland. I think that he was, in some degree, in

this matter a disciple of the school of reticence, but he certainly went beyond the right honourable gentleman, the member for Buckinghamshire. The right honourable gentleman, the member for Buckinghamshire, last year did express his opinions at the time when we heard that speech from Lord Mayo; but he has been extremely cautious and circumspect with regard to the repetition of those opinions ever since. Sir, when we cannot live on the food placed upon the table we must live on the crumbs that fall from it. In dealing with the real, substantial, and responsible scheme of the Government for dealing with the Irish Church, it is a matter of great importance to know whether any honourable gentleman, and especially honourable gentlemen opposite, have on any occasion brought any scheme into competition with it. The honourable member for Mayo (Mr. Moore), speaking his mind like a man, said that he tended towards an endowment of the three churches—a general endowment; and my honourable friend, the member for Galway (Mr. Gregory), with that frankness and courage which he always displays, avowed that this plan of general endowment was the plan and the policy which he would prefer, though I think he added that it was now too late to propose it. There can, therefore, be no room for hesitation or doubt as to the policy of those two honourable gentlemen, though both I think accompanied their opinions with the expression of a fear that the time for its establishment had gone by. But when I come to the right honourable gentleman the member for Buckinghamshire, I find much greater difficulty in understanding what he means; because he said that one of the great causes—indeed, it was the only cause he mentioned—of the discontent and disorder in Ireland was the complaint that she had one unendowed Church and clergy. He went on to say that, if this Bill passed, instead of having one unendowed Church and clergy, we should have three, and he suggested that this, instead of being a remedy for a mischief, would be a means of aggravating it. I am, therefore, driven to the conclusion that either the right honourable gentleman, like his colleague who sits near him (Mr. Gathorne Hardy), has no plan for dealing with the Church of Ireland or that, if he has a plan, it is the same one as was announced by his Government from these benches twelve months ago—the plan vulgarly called "levelling up."—leaving the Established Church her

endowments, raising the endowments of the Presbyterians to a worthier standard, and combining that with a liberal endowment for the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. This, at all events, I am safe in saying is the only plan indicated from the other side. I have heard very nearly the whole of this debate, and if any honourable gentleman has intimated a latent kindness for the Report of the Commission, and I have done him a wrong in supposing that no one has given such an intimation, I hope he will forgive me; but, as far as I am aware, the plan of endowing the three Churches, which must, of course, be accompanied by some scheme of endowment for the Methodists and other sects, is the only one—I will not say laid down—but glanced at or insinuated as a rival to the plan of the Government. What are we to say to that plan? It is to be disposed of very briefly. A phrase has come into use among some of the Irish clergy. Some of them say—"We are prepared to accept the inevitable," but I have not heard that any of them have said—"We are prepared to accept the impossible." If the plan of the three Churches was really entertained by the right honourable gentleman, why was it not announced at the hustings—at those hustings where every effort was made to represent us as being in secret league with the Pope of Rome, and when the honour and credit of Protestantism were in nearly every case—to his honour, I except the name of the right honourable and gallant gentleman the member for North Lancashire (Colonel Wilson-Patten)—sought to be monopolised by the party opposite? Why was not this plan, which is the only one about which they have ventured to hint as a remedy for the Church difficulties of Ireland, proposed, or at least mentioned, at the hustings? The voices were very inarticulate voices, and it is either the plan of the party opposite—in which case, as it is an impossible plan, it is needless to discuss it—or they have no plan at all. My honourable and learned friend the member for Richmond (Sir Roundell Palmer) came to the rescue, and he certainly proposed a plan, the product of a mind as ingenuous as it is powerful and accomplished, which was received as a kind of godsend by a large number of honourable gentlemen opposite. As every suggestion made by my honourable and learned friend is entitled to respectful consideration, I shall not apologise for adverting to the character of that plan even at this late

hour. The opinions of my honourable and learned friend are the more important, because his doctrine of property has been much accepted by authorities and speakers on the other side of the House, and because of the general cheering with which his declaration was greeted. I understand the fundamental doctrine of my honourable and learned friend to be that property given for the purpose and use of a portion of the community ought not to be withdrawn from that portion of the community except in certain definite cases. One of those cases I understand to be where the property is excessive in amount, in which case, according to my honourable and learned friend, it might be reduced. Another definite case was when the purpose to which the property was addressed was either absurd or bad in itself. And my honourable and learned friend, I think, finally glanced at a third cause which would justify the interposition of the Legislature—such misconduct in the administration of the funds as would be sufficient to warrant a forfeiture. Though I think that enumeration very well as far as it goes, I must claim on the part of the Legislature a larger and more extended right, and acknowledge myself bound by a much more comprehensive duty. It seems to me that when property has been given for a purpose that is not attained, and that cannot be attained, it is then the duty of the Legislature to see that the property is no longer wasted. I am putting the matter low, because, instead of being no longer wasted, if I were to state the full justification of our measure it would be rather this—where—even without the fault of the parties immediately concerned, the actual use and administration of a property, being totally different from that for which it is given, is likewise attended with the gravest political and social mischiefs, then the obligation of the Legislature to interfere is imperative. So far I listened with satisfaction to the speech of the honourable and learned gentleman, for he rose above the purely legal doctrine of trust, and claimed that there was a trust for the whole community of the Church. I agree with the honourable and learned gentleman in his extension of the doctrine; but I ask him to go with me to extend it still further, and to say that there is a trust—whether in the legal sense I know not, but in the political, the social, the moral sense there is a trust impressed upon this property, from first to last, for the benefit of the

nation. It was for the nation that the property was given. It is true it was given to corporations. Yes; but why? Not that they might enjoy it as private property, but that they might hold it on condition of duty. They were, as the honourable and learned gentleman truly says, only convenient symbols—convenient media for its conveyance from generation to generation. The real meaning, scope, and object was that through them it should be applied for all time to the benefit of the entire population of the kingdom, and this was a natural and intelligent arrangement when the entire nation was of one faith. In proportion as Dissent and difference of opinion creep into the country, the foundation of the religious Establishment so endowed comes to be by degrees more or less weakened and impaired, partly in proportion as the number of Dissenters is strong, partly in proportion as they are disposed or not disposed to acquiesce in the continuance of the Establishment. But when we come to a case like that of Ireland; when that which was given for the whole people has come to be appropriated for the enjoyment of a mere handful of the people; and when, at the same time, the property so enjoyed, while it remains in the hands of those who now hold it, is associated with the recollection of all the grievances and bitter misfortunes that have afflicted that country, so that the chain of the ecclesiastical and civil history of Ireland consists in the fact of two strands, one of which cannot possibly be unwound and separated from the other, I must decline to go into any court of justice, created for the purpose of administering the laws, in order to ascertain the rules by which we are bound. We are called to a function and avocation, which, in my opinion, is a yet higher one; we are to look for the principles of right in a broader, and, for such a case, a truer, aspect, and from that responsibility we cannot escape. We ought to be grateful to my honourable and learned friend for the distance in respect of that portion of our journey which he is content to travel in our company, because, considering the hard words of which we are the object, I think it requires some courage on his part to acknowledge us and to recognise us in any degree. My honourable and learned friend gives up the Establishment of the Church. I do not wonder that my right honourable friend the member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Walpole) entered a protest on this subject.

In giving up the establishment of the Church, my honourable and learned friend gives up the greater part, and I think the higher part, I am bound to say the higher and the worthier part, of the whole argument. All that relates to the consecration of the State by its union with the Church—all that relates to the supremacy of the Crown—all that relates to the constitutional argument as well as to the religious argument, disappears along with disestablishment; and my honourable and learned friend becomes open to that withering accusation which was delivered in a moment of extraordinary fervour by the right honourable gentleman the member for Buckinghamshire last year, when he described that awful conspiracy between Romanists and Ritualists for undermining the Throne by the denial of the Royal supremacy. But permit me to say the Royal supremacy is not denied or taken away by this Bill. The Royal supremacy has been developed in various forms at various periods of our history. It is the greatest mistake to suppose that since the Reformation the Royal supremacy has always been flowing, as it were, through the same channel. Most important and vital changes have been made with respect to the methods of its operation; but I know of no legal or authoritative definition of the law of supremacy, except it be that which describes it as the fundamental principle which makes the Sovereign of this country supreme over all persons and in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil. That which is an ecclesiastical cause at one period of our history, may not be an ecclesiastical cause at another period of our history; that which was an ecclesiastical cause before the Court of High Commission has no existence as such in the present generation; but so long as the Queen is supreme in every cause that can be brought into a court for the purpose whether of primary adjudication or of review, so long the Royal supremacy exists. If anyone be prepared to question that doctrine, I ask them whether the Royal supremacy exists in Scotland at this moment or not. If you hold that by this Bill the Royal supremacy is set aside, I defy you to maintain that there is a single rag or thread of Royal supremacy in Scotland. My honourable and learned friend is prepared—I do not say that he proposes—but he is prepared to give up the estates of the sees, the property of the Commissioners, and he says he is prepared to give up certain of the parochial endowments of

benefices. Of course, it would be impossible to fix any figure off-hand with precision ; but I believe he confined these cases of parochial endowments to populations of two hundred persons. Whether he intended to reserve out of the revenues of these benefices any portion of the supply of spiritual instruction and ordinances, I do not know, and I do not think he said ; but in this way my honourable and learned friend gives up one-third of the Church property of Ireland, and he proposes to retain the rest upon a rule which is, at any rate, perfectly intelligible.

My honourable and learned friend intimated that he would thus dispose of about one-half of that property. I am extremely glad to hear it is one-half instead of a third. I am delighted to hear he accompanies us only one inch further on our road. It gives me hope that possibly some day he will greatly improve his fractions. But my honourable and learned friend would retain the endowments in those cases where there is what I may call a congregation, not as denying that twenty people, or even ten people, may be a Christian congregation ; but, using the expression in the sense that he employs it when he speaks of " a substantive congregation," of which he thinks the law may take notice and cognisance. In this case my honourable and learned friend would retain the endowments. The first question which I should like to ask my honourable and learned friend is, whether there is upon the face of the earth, or in the history of legislation, any precedent for such a proceeding as he proposes ? And the reason I put that question to him is because he puts that question to us. Now I think it is quite plain that he has no precedent for it. I would not, however, condemn it on that ground alone, because in the circumstances of Ireland, such as they are, we are dealing with a case for which, I believe, there is no precedent in the civilised world. My honourable and learned friend certainly will not tell me that the case in which the courts of the United States adjudged to the Episcopal Church of New York the property of which, I believe, the value at the time of the adjudication was somewhere about £2,000 a year—my honourable and learned friend, I say, will not tell me that that was a case in point ; especially upon this ground, that although that was a proof of a great regard of the American Government for corporate property, it was not property which has belonged to a religious communion

of the State of New York in the character of an Established Church. My honourable and learned friend will correct me if I am wrong; but I do not think that the Anglican Church was ever an Established Church in the State of New York as it was in Virginia, and therefore it was a private society in which this endowment was continued. Well, let us see how this case stands in other matters. My honourable and learned friend by giving up the Establishment gives up the argument with regard to State religion and supremacy. Now, with respect to the means of spreading the doctrines of the Reformation, how does his plan recommend itself? If we are to maintain the Established Church for the purpose of spreading the doctrines of the Reformation, we ought to maintain it all the more assiduously and zealously in those places where it is improbable that it would be able to maintain itself. Even the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Gathorne Hardy) has come down somewhat from the high ground of last year, when he spoke of its being the glory of the Church to hold out the light of the Reformation all over Ireland, and he seems now to be disposed to withdraw. (Mr. Gathorne Hardy: No, no!) Well, then, he does not withdraw; but wishes to keep it in every parish in the land; but my honourable and learned friend does not propose to do so—and even if he were to have certain flying curates passing from one village to another, serving different congregations as they passed along in the course of the Sunday, my honourable and learned friend will never tell me that this is the plan he would recommend for gaining proselytes, or the way he thinks the work of the Irish Church should be carried out.

Well, let me try the plan of my honourable and learned friend by the rules of general prudence. When you have a fund to distribute and have not enough for everybody, to whom are you to give it? Is it to those who want it and cannot do without it, or to those who do not want it and can supply themselves? I should certainly have thought that on those principles the proper course was the former; but my honourable and learned friend's plan takes away funds from those scattered and poor Protestants on whose behalf appeals are constantly made to our commiseration, and gives it to those congregations which, according to every understood principle of reckoning in such matters, are capable of providing religious

worship and religious instruction for themselves. Well, how does this plan stand as regards a great object which we have in view—namely, that of conciliating the Roman Catholic population of Ireland? My honourable and learned friend must know that it is not the possession of a larger or smaller portion of these endowments as national endowments that is objected to by the Roman Catholic population. It is that they should be held by the Protestants at all, and if he ruthlessly cuts away a moiety of the endowments, but leaves the other moiety in their hands, the cause of offence remains, and all the festering recollections connected with it would still continue to afflict the mass of the Irish people. My honourable and learned friend criticised the Bill with respect to the observance of the local principle. He quoted from a speech of mine a declaration in which I had said that in my opinion it was dangerously resembling an act of public plunder if on the part of that handful of the Irish people who are in the possession of the ecclesiastical endowments we were to take the tithes of a parish in Mayo or Galway to supply the wants of wealthy congregations in Dublin or Belfast; and he thought he had found—what I am quite sure he will be forward to admit when the matter is explained, he has not found—a great deviation in this Bill from that regard for the local purposes of these funds, which I had so strongly professed. If we had found it necessary to centralise those funds for a purpose of national and general benefit, it would have been a totally different matter from transferring them from the handful of Protestants in one neighbourhood for the uses of another handful in another; but we have done neither the one nor the other. I stated to the House, in introducing the measure, that, in our view, it was essential to the satisfactory character of any plan for disposing of the residue of the property that it should be equal in its application to the various parts of Ireland, and if my honourable and learned friend examines the matter he will find that it is not possible to devise any scheme which shall more exactly redistribute the benefit of these funds than the scheme we have proposed. There is not one purpose to which we propose to apply them that does not reach over the whole of Ireland; there is not one purpose that does not regard and concern wants that are arising day by day in every parish of every county, nor is there one to which we do not propose

by this plan to give an easy and practicable access to institutions which will be either maintained or assisted out of these funds. I am bound to say there yet remains one more objection to the plan of my honourable and learned friend. If he retains these endowments in the wealthier parishes of Ireland, it is quite plain to me that he cannot give to the Irish Church that which I find it determined to assert for itself—namely, an absolute legal freedom—for he proposes to maintain benefices, and he will have to maintain the incidents of benefices, to maintain that part of the legal Church system which concerns the enjoyment of property under straight, rigid, and inflexible rules. Now, such retention of rules would, I am afraid, greatly interfere with that power of elastic adaptation of arrangements to wants and necessities all over Ireland to which members of the Established Church in Ireland look with sanguine hope as a principle enabling them to cope with the difficulties of the position. I therefore, Sir, feel bound to say that, great as is the respect which we have for the authority of my honourable and learned friend, it appears to me that we should do wrong were we to deviate from the plans we have adopted in the direction which he indicates to us.

And here let me say a word with regard to the application of funds to lunatic asylums in answer to what fell from the noble Lord the member for Middlesex (Lord George Hamilton) a word which I say with great satisfaction, because it affords me an agreeable opportunity of acknowledging the remarkable ability that distinguished his first address to the House. But the noble Lord has not examined into the case of these institutions. He stated that the money of the Church would be given to sectarian lunatic asylums of which he gave three or four examples. (Lord George Hamilton: I said it might be.) I think the noble Lord, naturally perhaps assuming that we could not have any other but the worst and darkest intentions, went a little further and said they would be so applied. But those three instances named by the noble Lord were not instances of lunatic asylums at all, but were instances of hospitals which would not come within the provisions of the Bill. Now, instead of replying in detail on such a point, I would simply say this—that in the whole application of these residuary funds there is not involved the

adoption of a single principle which is new to Parliament. If we are told that reformatories are not fit to receive any portion of these funds because reformatories are denominational, my answer is that these reformatories receive from year to year grants of the public money voted by Parliament; and if they are fit to receive money contributed by the taxpayers of three countries, they are fit to receive money proceeding from the Church funds of Ireland. With regard to lunatic asylums, those asylums are exclusively governed by persons who are appointed by the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland—that is to say, by officers who are responsible to Parliament. With respect to county infirmaries, the noble Lord knows very well that although these institutions are very ill-governed at present, yet they are under government of a legal character, which must be fixed and appointed by us, and which must be under any new and amended system—if our policy is allowed to have its way—of a perfectly impartial and secular description.

Well, Sir, there is more that I should have liked to say, were it not that the hands of the clock warn me that I ought to hasten to a close; and I will, therefore, proceed to what—to use a phrase that I am afraid has given some offence, although it was not used with the intention of giving any—I may call the "winding up" of my speech; but I applied the phrase "winding up" to these money arrangements because it is one which I thought conveniently expressed what I meant. This measure has been—and I do not much complain of it—the object undoubtedly of very hard words—sacrilege, spoliation, perfidy. All these and two more have been used; to which two I will now refer, because they were used by my right honourable friend the member for North Devon (Sir Stafford Northcote) at a Conservative dinner, unless he be wronged by the reporters, on the 3rd of March, when he delivered a speech on this subject, which appears to me more highly seasoned than the one he addressed to the House. If I might venture to express an opinion on such a matter, I would recommend that when honourable gentlemen have strong things to say about public measures the best place is to say them in is this House. (SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE: I shall be quite prepared to say it here at the proper time.) I should say the proper time was in the course of this debate. I want to refer to his remarks because I am satisfied with and somewhat proud

of them. My right honourable friend said that when the English people understand the measure they will feel that it is unparalleled in its character, and that it combines a gigantic scheme of robbery with a still worse system of bribery. Those words have given satisfaction to me for two reasons. In the first place, because my right honourable friend having used those words, cannot possibly hereafter use any others that are worse, and therefore we know that we have touched the bottom. I have another source of satisfaction. It is just the kind of delineation and picture which, when drawn by a hostile hand, shows me that we have succeeded in the framing of our measure. When my right honourable friend says we have committed robbery, what he means is that we have been faithful to the principles of disestablishment and general disendowment which we announced last year, and which we professed to our constituents; and when he says we have committed bribery, he means that, in the application of those principles, we have studied carefully and to the best of our ability to ensure that there should be every mitigation and every softening which they could receive in their practical application. Therefore I accept the involuntary but most conclusive testimony given by my right honourable friend that the spirit in which we have proceeded is one, among a variety of evidences afforded me by the demeanour of the House, that they think the Government has not failed in embodying in this important measure the main considerations which it was their duty to include in it.

I have nothing else to say which is essential or material. I wish to release this House; and I will therefore conclude by thanking the House for the patience with which they have listened to me at this advanced hour of the night or of the morning, whatever we may think fit to call it. As the clock points rapidly towards the dawn, so are rapidly flowing out the years, the months, the days, that remain to the existence of the Irish Established Church. An honourable member last night assured us, speaking, I have no doubt, his own honest convictions, that we were but at the beginning of this question. I believe that not only every man who sits on this side of the House, but every man who sits on that, carries within his breast a silent monitor which tells him that this controversy is fast moving to a close. It is for the interest of all of us that

we should not keep this establishment of religion in a prolonged agony. Nothing can come of that prolongation but an increase of pain, an increase of exasperation, and a diminution of that temper which now happily prevails—a temper which is disposed to mitigate the adjustment of this great question in its details. There may also come from that prolongation the very evil which the right honourable gentleman opposite made it a charge against us that we were labouring to produce, but which we think likely to be rather the probable consequence of his line of argument—namely, the drawing into this Irish controversy the English question which we conceive to be wholly different. We think so, because, although in the two countries there may be and there are Establishments of religions, we never can admit that an Establishment which we think, in the main, good and efficient for its purposes, is to be regarded as being endangered by the course which we may adopt in reference to an Establishment which we look upon as being inefficient and bad. The day, therefore, it seems to me, is rapidly approaching when this controversy will come to an end, and I feel that I am not wrong in appealing to that silent witness to the justice of my anticipations which I am satisfied exists on both sides of the House. Not now are we opening this great question. Opened, perhaps, it was, when the Parliament which expired last year pronounced upon it that emphatic judgment which can never be recalled. Opened it was further when, in the months of autumn, the discussions which were held in every quarter of the country turned mainly on the subject of the Irish Church. Prosecuted another stage it was, when the completed elections discovered to us a manifestation of the national verdict more emphatic than, with the rarest exceptions, has been witnessed during the whole of our Parliamentary history. The good cause was further advanced towards its triumphant issue when the silent acknowledgment of the late Government that they declined to contest the question was given by their retirement from office, and their choosing a less responsible position from which to carry on a more desultory warfare against the policy which they had in the previous Session unsuccessfully attempted to resist. Another blow will soon be struck in the same good cause, and I will not intercept it one single moment more.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL

THE late Duke of Argyll was one of the few born orators in the history of English politics. Although he never sat in the House of Commons, he by no means confined his efforts to the House of Lords. He was quite at home on a public platform, and he could appeal with equal success to audiences of very different kinds. Introduced very early into public and official life, he soon acquired a familiarity with affairs of state which gave to his speeches the practical character they might otherwise have lacked. He resembled Bright more nearly than any other English speaker. But his style was his own. He had the great gift of putting his principles naturally into stately and dignified language. If he preferred the House of Lords even to a popular meeting, it was partly perhaps from habit and association, partly because he knew that he was at the same time addressing a much larger public outside. This was peculiarly the case with the Eastern Question. There the Duke took the same side as Mr. Gladstone, and his attacks upon Lord Beaconsfield's policy rested upon an equally broad foundation. It affords, therefore, a very good opportunity for testing and exhibiting the characteristic features of his oratory. He was not an ingenious or a subtle speaker. He did not wind himself into a subject, like Burke, or accumulate a series of propositions until he had built up an argumentative case strong enough to support the conclusion he wished to draw. His method was rather expository and didactic. Yet he was never prosaic or dull. His gift of language was so rich, and so well employed, that those who disagreed with him the most did not enjoy listening to him the least. He played upon all the resources of our English tongue with such consummate dexterity that men heard him with the same kind of pleasure as a musical performance can give.

The Eastern Question

Address in Answer to the Queen's Speech in 1877

As I took some part in the agitation to which the noble Lord referred at the commencement of the evening, I trust your Lordships will allow me to say a few words in reply. The reference was made in a speech of very great ability; but sharing as I do fully in the feelings which have been expressed by my noble friend behind me with regard to the accession to this House of the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Beaconsfield), I certainly shall not comment in a tone of anything like asperity on what has recently fallen from him—for as a general rule the language he holds towards his opponents is not only full of humour, but full of good humour. I, however, regret the more on that account that he should, during the past autumn, have spoken in terms of such extreme harshness of those who took part in the agitation to which he alluded. I will attribute it to momentary irritation. I do not, at the same time, consider this a fitting opportunity for that full and ample discussion by which only that agitation could be completely explained and defended. I shall, therefore, wait until the papers are laid on the table of your Lordships' House, and shall then take the opportunity of stating fully to the House the grounds on which I deemed myself to be justified in taking part in that agitation. I am sure no member of this House—no Peer, no Englishman—would wish to call in question the right of public speaking—it is one of the dearest rights as well of Englishmen as of Scotchmen and Irishmen. But this I will confess frankly—that, in my opinion, public meetings in general ought not to interfere with the foreign policy of the country, which is for the most part concerned with matters of extreme delicacy and much difficulty, embracing *nuances* and shades which it is almost impossible to make plain to a public assembly. I, therefore, admit that there ought not to be such interference as that of which I am speaking, except in extreme cases; and unless I make out such a case when the subject comes before your Lordships, I will submit to any censure which your Lordships may pronounce. I wish, in the next place, to refer very briefly to the speech which we have just heard from the noble Earl the Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Lord Derby). I am free to say that that speech

has disabused us on this side of the House of an impression which was created by the language, not officially reported, but which is supposed to have been held by the noble Marquess who was the special envoy of this country at Constantinople; and, having mentioned him, I hope I may be allowed to add my humble tribute of respect and admiration for the acceptance by him of the mission which took him to Turkey. I believe no purer act of patriotism or of public duty has ever been performed. He undertook a task from which he had nothing to gain, while he submitted, in going to Constantinople, his reputation to some risk. That reputation, however, has certainly not been sullied, and I know no case, although party spirit is a thing of which I have had considerable experience during my public life, in which all parties so eagerly united to hail an appointment as in that of the noble Marquess, and to lend him their support. No man, I may add, hailed more gladly than I did his appointment, or felt more confident that he would uphold the honour and interests of England. My Lords, I now return to the speech of the noble Earl the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who denies that there has been any change in the policy of the Government with respect to this Eastern Question. I wish to point out to the House what I look upon as an entire change of policy. Up to the date of the 12th of August, and from the close of last session of Parliament, the public in this country had no right to suppose, and no reason, that Government were shaken in the policy which they had pursued up to that time—the policy of absolute non-intervention in the internal affairs of Turkey—not only non-intervention as regards ourselves, but remonstrance with, and resistance to, all the other Powers of Europe for mixing themselves up in those affairs. The noble Earl, after the famous Berlin Note, in writing to Sir Henry Elliot, distinctly says that it was the policy of the Government to avoid and prevent all interference of the States of Europe in the internal affairs of Turkey. There can be no doubt about that, he repeats it over and over again; and up to the time of the public meetings held in the autumn, this was believed to be the fixed policy of the Government. On the 11th of September, however, as reported in *The Times* of the 12th, a deputation of Conservative working men waited on the noble Earl and addressed to him a remonstrance with

regard to the affairs of Turkey. I will read to the House the words which the noble Earl used in reply, as reported in *The Times*. He said—

> So far as those unfortunate Bulgarians who have suffered so much are concerned, they have a right, no doubt, to such reparation as it is now possible to make, and they have a right also, no doubt, to the signal, conspicuous, and exemplary punishment of those who have been the offenders. I think they have also a right that in some manner or another we shall take such steps as may secure them from a recurrence of similar abuses for the future.

My Lords, I say that that was an absolute change of policy—as sudden and complete as if there had been a change of Government. The noble Earl followed up what he said on that occasion by a speech addressed to another deputation headed by the Lord Mayor of London. That was succeeded by the well-known despatch of the 21st of September, in which the noble Earl made the gravest demands on the Turkish Government for the punishment of the offenders and the better security and good government of the Christian subjects of the Porte. These were obligations which the Government considered they had come under in consequence of the Bulgarian atrocities. My noble friend (Earl Granville) was, therefore, justified in saying that there was a sudden and complete change of policy, but a change involving no disgrace or discredit whatever to the Government; and if that language had been held throughout, no censure could be passed upon the Government on that account. With regard to the speech of the noble Earl, the Secretary of State, to-night, I regret that I interpret it in another way—as a step backwards, and a very distinct step backwards, from these public engagements. In the first place I deplored to hear from the noble Earl a reiterated and distinct statement of his regret that the Turkish Government had not succeeded in repressing the insurrection in Herzegovina and Bosnia. I admit that it is legitimate to regret that a friendly Government has not been able to suppress an insurrection, but on one ground—that you can lay your hand on your heart and say that it is a Government which you ought to support, and which treats its subjects with such tolerable fairness that you can wish it to secure its power over them. Is this the case? Can you lay your hand on your heart and say that this is a Government you ought to sympathise with, and not with the insurrection? I say distinctly

in this "high place"—in this "house top" of Europe, that every insurrection against that Government is a legitimate insurrection. Human beings under that Government owe it no allegiance. I heard that declaration of the noble Earl with infinite regret, and it is not one that will satisfy the feelings and consciences of the people of this country. I heard also with infinite regret the declaration of the noble Earl that he was determined in no case to use force to compel the Turks to do justice to their Christian subjects. I do not know whether the noble Earl has already made that announcement to Europe, but if so, you might as well not have sent an envoy to Constantinople. The noble Lord who moved the Address denounced what you have called the "bag and baggage" policy; but I think that this is the very policy pursued towards the noble Marquess himself. The noble Lord objected to this idea, because, he said, if the Turks were sent out of Europe they would go somewhere else where they would do equal mischief. I am glad that if the noble Marquess was sent from Constantinople he has come back to us, and I hope his influence in the Government will be in favour of the oppressed subjects of the Porte—as it is reported and believed to have been at the Conference. The noble Earl, the Secretary of State, has told us that the object of the Conference was twofold—to secure power to Europe and good government to the subjects of Turkey. Have you secured good government, or even a tolerable prospect of it? That is what the people of England desire to know. You proposed certain terms for the good government of Turkey, and these terms have been refused. Have you got any others? Have you secured peace? The noble Earl declared that peace depends upon one man, and yet two sentences afterwards he declared he did not think that peace depended on the Emperor of Russia. Which is true? The declaration shows the fundamental error in the policy of the noble Earl. He does not appreciate—he has never appreciated—the forces at work in this question. Do you think this great Eastern Question, which has been brooding over Europe, and which has darkly overshadowed it for forty or fifty years—do you think that this question which has been forced upon you, reluctant as you have been to see its gravity—do you mean to tell the House of Lords that this question depends upon the action of one man, and that man the Emperor of Russia?

And then you profess the next moment to believe that the Emperor of Russia is perfectly sincere. I say you will have no peace in Europe until the well-being of the Christian subjects of the Porte has been secured by the united action of the European Powers. And if you have sent one of your most distinguished members to Constantinople, declaring beforehand your guns to be loaded with blank cartridge, I say you might just as well have sat still, twiddling your thumbs, as you did for three months before. The noble Earl says that the Conference has not failed, and that we have obtained by it securities for the better treatment of the Christian subjects of the Porte. But the securities have been cut down and brought to such a minimum that no human being will think them worth fighting for. That may be one way of securing peace; but will the Christian population of Turkey be restrained from fighting for something better than you have given them—does he think that the demands that will be made will never exceed this irreducible minimum? Has the noble Earl never heard of the Sibylline leaves? Do you think that the great forces of religion and the sympathies of people with people, which are at the root of this great Eastern Question, will be satisfied with this irreducible minimum to which the claims of the Christians have been cut down, and to which the noble Marquess seems to have consented? If the noble Earl does not believe that, the Conference has failed both in securing peace and good government for Turkey. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs says that our plain course is to do nothing—to let things drift. The noble Lord who moved the Address said it was very wrong to speak to the man at the helm. There is no man at the helm. You tell us yourselves that you will do nothing—and that you will let the vessel drift on. But you know that there are other powers in Europe besides the noble Earl, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and much as he may despise sentimentality in politics—forgetting that sentiment rules the world, forgetting that all moral feeling is founded on sentiment—much as he may despise sentimentality in politics, I am greatly mistaken if sentimentality will not be too strong for him if someone does not seize the helm which the noble Earl says the Government has abandoned. I believe that Europe will drift into a bloody and dreadful war. I am not one of those who deprecate war

under all circumstances, or who think that peace under all circumstances is the object that ought to be secured by a Christian people. There are causes that are worth fighting for. There are people who desire "peace at any price," but it is a price to be paid by others and not by themselves. "Anything for a quiet life"; but the quietness of life is to be for themselves and not for others. That is a feeling of utter selfishness, and, my Lords, my belief is that this policy will end in war. Let Her Majesty's Government take the European concert in time, so that the European Powers may act together. You have been ever reluctant to take part in this united action; you refused to join with Austria in the Andrassy Note; you were the drag upon Europe, you kept it from acting together for six or eight months. It may be too late now; but if you have the chance of preserving peace, or of limiting war to one locality or for any definite purpose, for Heaven's sake re-establish your European concord, and do not be so foolish or so weak as to say, "We shall never fight; we shall never force our will on the Turks." This course is one of utter fatuity; and my sincere belief is that, sooner or later, such a policy will end in a disastrous war.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL was not only a great political satirist and a literary essayist, remarkable for critical insight. He had also the gift of easy, graceful, and suggestive speech. He was a perfect type of the cultivated democrat, familiar with history, and well aware that public opinion had often been grievously mistaken, but at the same time convinced, like Burke, that it was a safer guide than the judgment of any individual, or any class. He was never engaged in the ordinary course of political conflict. In the nomenclature of American parties he was a Republican, though an independent one. In England he would have been a moderate, consistent Liberal. At the time of the Civil War which disturbed the American Union he was an enthusiastic Northerner, and, though not prone to hero-worship, he idolised Lincoln. But there were some American institutions, such as the caucus and the spoils-system, from which he was naturally averse, and he was a free trader in the old English sense, believing in a tariff for revenue only. He was proud of being a pure Englishman by descent, and no American has ever been more attached to this country. As Minister of the United States in London, he was thoroughly and completely at home, so much so that some of his fellow-citizens most unjustly suspected him of paying too much deference to the susceptibilities of the British Government. He was really a most patriotic American. But his sympathies were apt to be cosmopolitan. His occasional verses, some of which have real fire as well as finish, show how ardently he felt for the cause of Italian independence, and in the freedom of private conversation he did not disguise his leanings towards Irish autonomy. Always able to appreciate the arguments on both sides of any question, he held tenaciously to the principles of liberty and progress,

on which he believed that civilisation rests. The wide range of his reading, and the great strength of his memory, furnished him as a speaker with abundant material for the exercise of his varied and allusive style.

Democracy

Inaugural Address on assuming the Presidency of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Birmingham, England, October 6, 1884

He must be a born leader or misleader of men, or must have been sent into the world unfurnished with that modulating and restraining balance-wheel which we call a sense of humour, who, in old age, has as strong a confidence in his opinions and in the necessity of bringing the universe into conformity with them as he had in youth. In a world the very condition of whose being is that it should be in perpetual flux, where all seems mirage, and the one abiding thing is the effort to distinguish realities from appearances, the elderly man must be indeed of a singularly tough and valid fibre who is certain that he has any clarified residuum of experience, any assured verdict of reflection, that deserves to be called an opinion, or who, even if he had, feels that he is justified in holding mankind by the button while he is expounding it. And in a world of daily—nay, almost hourly—journalism, where every clever man, every man who thinks himself clever, or whom anybody else thinks clever, is called upon to deliver his judgment point-blank and at the word of command on every conceivable subject of human thought, or, on what sometimes seems to him very much the same thing, on every inconceivable display of human want of thought, there is such a spendthrift waste of all those commonplaces which furnish the permitted staple of public discourse that there is little chance of beguiling a new tune out of the one-stringed instrument on which we have been thrumming so long. In this desperate neccessity one is often tempted to think that, if all the words of the dictionary were tumbled down in a heap and then all those fortuitous juxta-positions and combinations that made tolerable sense were picked out and pieced together, we might find among them some poignant suggestions towards novelty of thought or

expression. But, alas! it is only the great poets who seem to have this unsolicited profusion of unexpected and incalculable phrase, this infinite variety of topic. For everybody else everything has been said before, and said over again after. He who has read his Aristotle will be apt to think that observation has on most points of general applicability said its last word, and he who has mounted the tower of Plato to look abroad from it will never hope to climb another with so lofty a vantage of speculation. Where it is so simple if not so easy a thing to hold one's peace, why add to the general confusion of tongues? There is something disheartening, too, in being expected to fill up not less than a certain measure of time, as if the mind were an hour-glass, that need only be shaken and set on one end or the other, as the case may be, to run its allotted sixty minutes with decorous exactitude. I recollect being once told by the late eminent naturalist, Agassiz, that when he was to deliver his first lecture as professor (at Zürich, I believe) he had grave doubts of his ability to occupy the prescribed three-quarters of an hour. He was speaking without notes, and glancing anxiously from time to time at the watch that lay before him on the desk. "When I had spoken a half hour," he said, "I had told them everything I knew in the world, everything! Then I began to repeat myself," he added, roguishly, "and I have done nothing else ever since." Beneath the humorous exaggeration of the story I seemed to see the face of a very serious and improving moral. And yet if one were to say only what he had to say and then stopped, his audience would feel defrauded of their honest measure. Let us take courage by the example of the French, whose exportation of Bordeaux wines increases as the area of their land in vineyards is diminished.

To me, somewhat hopelessly revolving these things, the undelayable year has rolled round, and I find myself called upon to say something in this place, where so many wiser men have spoken before me. Precluded, in my quality of national guest, by motives of taste and discretion, from dealing with any question of immediate and domestic concern, it seemed to me wisest, or at any rate most prudent, to choose a topic of comparatively abstract interest, and to ask your indulgence for a few somewhat generalised remarks on a matter concerning which I had some experimental knowledge, derived from the

use of such eyes and ears as Nature had been pleased to endow me withal, and such report as I had been able to win from them. The subject which most readily suggested itself was the spirit and the working of those conceptions of life and polity which are lumped together, whether for reproach or commendation, under the name of Democracy. By temperament and education of a conservative turn, I saw the last years of that quaint Arcadia which French travellers saw with delighted amazement a century ago, and have watched the change (to me a sad one) from an agricultural to a proletary population. The testimony of Balaam should carry some conviction. I have grown to manhood and am now growing old with the growth of this system of government in my native land, have watched its advances, or what some would call its encroachments, gradual and irresistible as those of a glacier, have been an ear-witness to the forebodings of wise and good and timid men, and have lived to see those forebodings belied by the course of events, which is apt to show itself humorously careless of the reputation of prophets. I recollect hearing a sagacious old gentleman say in 1840 that the doing away with the property qualification for suffrage twenty years before had been the ruin of the State of Massachusetts; that it had put public credit and private estate alike at the mercy of demagogues. I lived to see that Commonwealth twenty odd years later paying the interest on her bonds in gold, though it cost her sometimes nearly three for one to keep her faith, and that while suffering an unparalleled drain of men and treasure in helping to sustain the unity and self-respect of the nation.

If universal suffrage has worked ill in our larger cities, as it certainly has, this has been mainly because the hands that wielded it were untrained to its use. There the election of a majority of the trustees of the public money is controlled by the most ignorant and vicious of a population which has come to us from abroad, wholly unpractised in self-government and incapable of assimilation by American habits and methods. But the finances of our towns, where the native tradition is still dominant and whose affairs are discussed and settled in a public assembly of the people, have been in general honestly and prudently administered. Even in manufacturing towns, where a majority of the voters live by their daily wages, it is not so often the recklessness as the moderation of public

expenditure that surprises an old-fashioned observer. "The beggar is in the saddle at last," cries Proverbial Wisdom. "Why, in the name of all former experience, doesn't he ride to the Devil?" Because in the very act of mounting he ceased to be a beggar and became part owner of the piece of property he bestrides. The last thing we need be anxious about is property. It always has friends or the means of making them. If riches have wings to fly away from their owner, they have wings also to escape danger.

I hear America sometimes playfully accused of sending you all your storms, and am in the habit of parrying the charge by alleging that we are enabled to do this because, in virtue of our protective system, we can afford to make better bad weather than anybody else. And what wiser use could we make of it than to export it in return for the paupers which some European countries are good enough to send over to us who have not attained to the same skill in the manufacture of them? But bad weather is not the worst thing that is laid at our door. A French gentleman, not long ago, forgetting Burke's monition of how unwise it is to draw an indictment against a whole people, has charged us with the responsibility of whatever he finds disagreeable in the morals or manners of his countrymen. If M. Zola or some other competent witness would only go into the box and tell us what those morals and manners were before our example corrupted them! But I confess that I find little to interest and less to edify me in these international bandyings of "You're another."

I shall address myself to a single point only in the long list of offences of which we are more or less gravely accused, because that really includes all the rest. It is that we are infecting the Old World with what seems to be thought the entirely new disease of Democracy. It is generally people who are in what are called easy circumstances who can afford the leisure to treat themselves to a handsome complaint, and these experience an immediate alleviation when once they have found a sonorous Greek name to abuse it by. There is something consolatory also, something flattering to their sense of personal dignity, and to that conceit of singularity which is the natural recoil from our uneasy consciousness of being commonplace, in thinking ourselves victims of a malady by

which no one had ever suffered before. Accordingly they find it simpler to class under one comprehensive heading whatever they find offensive to their nerves, their tastes, their interests, or what they suppose to be their opinions, and christen it Democracy, much as physicians label every obscure disease gout, or as cross-grained fellows lay their ill-temper to the weather. But is it really a new ailment, and, if it be, is America answerable for it? Even if she were, would it account for the phylloxera, and hoof-and-mouth disease, and bad harvests, and bad English, and the German bands, and the Boers, and all the other discomforts with which these later days have vexed the souls of them that go in chariots? Yet I have seen the evil example of Democracy in America cited as the source and origin of things quite as heterogeneous and quite as little connected with it by any sequence of cause and effect. Surely this ferment is nothing new. It has been at work for centuries, and we are more conscious of it only because in this age of publicity, where the newspapers offer a rostrum to whoever has a grievance, or fancies that he has, the bubbles and scum thrown up by it are more noticeable on the surface than in those dumb ages when there was a cover of silence and suppression on the cauldron. Bernardo Navagero, speaking of the Provinces of Lower Austria in 1546, tells us that "in them there are five sorts of persons, Clergy, Barons, Nobles, Burghers, and Peasants. Of these last no account is made, *because they have no voice in the Diet.*"[1]

Nor was it among the people that subversive or mistaken doctrines had their rise. A Father of the Church said that property was theft many centuries before Proudhon was born. Bourdaloue reaffirmed it. Montesquieu was the inventor of national workshops, and of the theory that the State owed every man a living. Nay, was not the Church herself the first organised Democracy? A few centuries ago the chief end of man was to keep his soul alive, and then the little kernel of

[1] Below the Peasants, it should be remembered, was still another even more helpless class, the servile farm-labourers. The same witness informs us that of the extraordinary imposts the Peasants paid nearly twice as much in proportion to their estimated property as the Barons, Nobles, and Burghers together. Moreover, the upper classes were assessed at their own valuation, while they arbitrarily fixed that of the Peasants, who had no voice (*Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti*, Serie I., tomo i., pp. 378, 379, 389).

leaven that sets the gases at work was religious, and produced the Reformation. Even in that, far-sighted persons like the Emperor Charles V saw the germ of political and social revolution. Now that the chief end of man seems to have become the keeping of the body alive, and as comfortably alive as possible, the leaven also has become wholly political and social. But there had also been social upheavals before the Reformation and contemporaneously with it, especially among men of Teutonic race. The Reformation gave outlet and direction to an unrest already existing. Formerly the immense majority of men—our brothers—knew only their sufferings, their wants, and their desires. They are beginning now to know their opportunity and their power. All persons who see deeper than their plates are rather inclined to thank God for it than to bewail it, for the sores of Lazarus have a poison in them against which Dives has no antidote.

There can be no doubt that the spectacle of a great and prosperous Democracy on the other side of the Atlantic must react powerfully on the aspirations and political theories of men in the Old World who do not find things to their mind; but, whether for good or evil, it should not be overlooked that the acorn from which it sprang was ripened on the British oak. Every successive swarm that has gone out from this *officina gentium* has, when left to its own instincts—may I not call them hereditary instincts?—assumed a more or less thoroughly democratic form. This would seem to show, what I believe to be the fact, that the British Constitution, under whatever disguises of prudence or decorum, is essentially democratic. England, indeed, may be called a monarchy with democratic tendencies, the United States a democracy with conservative instincts. People are continually saying that America is in the air, and I am glad to think it is, since this means only that a clearer conception of human claims and human duties is beginning to be prevalent. The discontent with the existing order of things, however, pervaded the atmosphere wherever the conditions were favourable, long before Columbus, seeking the back door of Asia, found himself knocking at the front door of America. I say wherever the conditions were favourable, for it is certain that the germs of disease do not stick or find a prosperous field for their development and noxious activity unless where the simplest

sanitary precautions have been neglected. "For this effect defective comes by cause," as Polonius said long ago. It is only by instigation of the wrongs of men that what are called the Rights of Man become turbulent and dangerous. It is then only that they syllogize unwelcome truths. It is not the insurrections of ignorance that are dangerous, but the revolts of intelligence—

> The wicked and the weak rebel in vain,
> Slaves by their own compulsion.

Had the governing classes in France during the last century paid as much heed to their proper business as to their pleasures or manners, the guillotine need never have severed that spinal marrow of orderly and secular tradition through which in a normally constituted state the brain sympathises with the extremities and sends will and impulsion thither. It is only when the reasonable and practicable are denied that men demand the unreasonable and impracticable; only when the possible is made difficult that they fancy the impossible to be easy. Fairy tales are made out of the dreams of the poor. No; the sentiment which lies at the root of democracy is nothing new. I am speaking always of a sentiment, a spirit, and not of a form of government; for this was but the outgrowth of the other and not its cause. This sentiment is merely an expression of the natural wish of people to have a hand, if need be a controlling hand, in the management of their own affairs. What is new is that they are more and more gaining that control, and learning more and more how to be worthy of it. What we used to call the tendency or drift—what we are being taught to call more wisely the evolution of things—has for some time been setting steadily in this direction. There is no good in arguing with the inevitable. The only argument available with an east wind is to put on your overcoat. And in this case, also, the prudent will prepare themselves to encounter what they cannot prevent. Some people advise us to put on the brakes, as if the movement of which we are conscious were that of a railway train running down an incline. But a metaphor is no argument, though it be sometimes the gunpowder to drive one home and imbed it in the memory. Our disquiet comes of what nurses and other experienced persons call growing-pains, and need not seriously alarm us. They are what every generation before us—certainly every

generation since the invention of printing—has gone through with more or less good fortune. To the door of every generation there comes a knocking, and unless the household, like the Thane of Cawdor and his wife, have been doing some deed without a name, they need not shudder. It turns out at worst to be a poor relation who wishes to come in out of the cold. The porter always grumbles and is slow to open. "Who's there, in the name of Beelzebub?" he mutters. Not a change for the better in our human housekeeping has ever taken place that wise and good men have not opposed it—have not prophesied with the alderman that the world would wake up to find its throat cut in consequence of it. The world, on the contrary, wakes up, rubs its eyes, yawns, stretches itself, and goes about its business as if nothing had happened. Suppression of the slave trade, abolition of slavery, trade unions—at all of these excellent people shook their heads despondingly, and murmured "Ichabod." But the trade unions are now debating instead of conspiring, and we all read their discussions with comfort and hope, sure that they are learning the business of citizenship and the difficulties of practical legislation.

One of the most curious of these frenzies of exclusion was that against the emancipation of the Jews. All share in the government of the world was denied for centuries to perhaps the ablest, certainly the most tenacious, race that had ever lived in it—the race to whom we owed our religion and the purest spiritual stimulus and consolation to be found in all literature—a race in which ability seems as natural and hereditary as the curve of their noses, and whose blood, furtively mingling with the bluest bloods in Europe, has quickened them with its own indomitable impulsion. We drove them into a corner, but they had their revenge, as the wronged are always sure to have it sooner or later. They made their corner the counter and banking-house of the world, and thence they rule it and us with the ignobler sceptre of finance. Your grandfathers mobbed Priestley only that you might set up his statue and make Birmingham the headquarters of English Unitarianism. We hear it said sometimes that this is an age of transition, as if that made matters clearer; but can any one point us to an age that was not? If he could, he would show us an age of stagnation. The question for us, as it has been

for all before us, is to make the transition gradual and easy, to see that our points are right so that the train may not come to grief. For we should remember that nothing is more natural for people whose education has been neglected than to spell evolution with an initial " r." A great man struggling with the storms of fate has been called a sublime spectacle; but surely a great man wrestling with these new forces that have come into the world, mastering them and controlling them to beneficent ends, would be a yet sublimer. Here is not a danger, and if there were it would be only a better school of manhood, a nobler scope for ambition. I have hinted that what people are afraid of in democracy is less the thing itself than what they conceive to be its necessary adjuncts and consequences. It is supposed to reduce all mankind to a dead level of mediocrity in character and culture, to vulgarise men's conceptions of life, and therefore their code of morals, manners, and conduct—to endanger the rights of property and possession. But I believe that the real gravamen of the charges lies in the habit it has of making itself generally disagreeable by asking the Powers that Be at the most inconvenient moment whether they are the powers that ought to be. If the powers that be are in a condition to give a satisfactory answer to this inevitable question, they need feel in no way discomfited by it.

Few people take the trouble of trying to find out what democracy really is. Yet this would be a great help, for it is our lawless and uncertain thoughts, it is the indefiniteness of our impressions, that fill darkness, whether mental or physical, with spectres and hobgoblins. Democracy is nothing more than an experiment in government, more likely to succeed in a new soil, but likely to be tried in all soils, which must stand or fall on its own merits as others have done before it. For there is no trick of perpetual motion in politics any more than in mechanics. President Lincoln defined democracy to be " the government of the people by the people for the people." This is a sufficiently compact statement of it as a political arrangement. Theodore Parker said that " Democracy meant not 'I'm as good as you are,' but 'You're as good as I am.'" And this is the ethical conception of it, necessary as a complement of the other; a conception which, could it be made actual and practical, would easily solve all the riddles that the

old sphinx of political and social economy who sits by the roadside has been proposing to mankind from the beginning, and which mankind have shown such a singular talent for answering wrongly. In this sense Christ was the first true democrat that ever breathed, as the old dramatist Dekker said He was the first true gentleman. The characters may be easily doubled, so strong is the likeness between them. A beautiful and profound parable of the Persian poet Jellaladeen tells us that "One knocked at the Beloved's door, and a voice asked from within 'Who is there?' and he answered 'It is I.' Then the voice said, 'This house will not hold me and thee'; and the door was not opened. Then went the lover into the desert and fasted and prayed in solitude, and after a year he returned and knocked again at the door; and again the voice asked 'Who is there?' and he said 'It is thyself'; and the door was opened to him." But that is idealism, you will say, and this is an only too practical world. I grant it; but I am one of those who believe that the real will never find an irremovable basis till it rests on the ideal. It used to be thought that a democracy was possible only in a small territory, and this is doubtless true of a democracy strictly defined, for in such all the citizens decide directly upon every question of public concern in a general assembly. An example still survives in the tiny Swiss canton of Appenzell. But this immediate intervention of the people in their own affairs is not of the essence of democracy; it is not necessary, nor indeed, in most cases, practicable. Democracies to which Mr. Lincoln's definition would fairly enough apply have existed, and now exist, in which, though the supreme authority reside in the people, yet they can act only indirectly on the national policy. This generation has seen a democracy with an imperial figurehead, and in all that have ever existed the body politic has never embraced all the inhabitants included within its territory, the right to share in the direction of affairs has been confined to citizens, and citizenship has been further restricted by various limitations, sometimes of property, sometimes of nativity, and always of age and sex.

The framers of the American Constitution were far from wishing or intending to found a democracy in the strict sense of the word, though, as was inevitable, every expansion of the scheme of government they elaborated has been in a

democratical direction. But this has been generally the slow result of growth, and not the sudden innovation of theory; in fact, they had a profound disbelief in theory, and knew better than to commit the folly of breaking with the past. They were not seduced by the French fallacy that a new system of government could be ordered like a new suit of clothes. They would as soon have thought of ordering a new suit of flesh and skin. It is only on the roaring loom of time that the stuff is woven for such a vesture of their thought and experience as they were meditating. They recognised fully the value of tradition and habit as the great allies of permanence and stability. They all had that distaste for innovation which belonged to their race, and many of them a distrust of human nature derived from their creed. The day of sentiment was over, and no dithyrambic affirmations or fine-drawn analyses of the Rights of Man would serve their present turn. This was a practical question, and they addressed themselves to it as men of knowledge and judgment should. Their problem was how to adapt English principles and precedents to the new conditions of American life, and they solved it with singular discretion. They put as many obstacles as they could contrive, not in the way of the people's will, but of their whim. With few exceptions they probably admitted the logic of the then accepted syllogism—democracy, anarchy, despotism. But this formula was framed upon the experience of small cities shut up to stew within their narrow walls, where the number of citizens made but an inconsiderable fraction of the inhabitants, where every passion was reverberated from house to house and from man to man with gathering rumour till every impulse became gregarious and therefore inconsiderate, and every popular assembly needed but an infusion of eloquent sophistry to turn it into a mob, all the more dangerous because sanctified with the formality of law.[1]

Fortunately their case was wholly different. They were to legislate for a widely scattered population and for States already practised in the discipline of a partial independence. They had an unequalled opportunity and enormous advantages.

[1] The effect of the electric telegraph in reproducing this trooping of emotion and perhaps of opinion is yet to be measured. The effect of Darwinism as a disintegrator of humanitarianism is also to be reckoned with.

The material they had to work upon was already democratical by instinct and habitude. It was tempered to their hands by more than a century's schooling in self-government. They had but to give permanent and conservative form to a ductile mass. In giving impulse and direction to their new institutions, especially in supplying them with checks and balances, they had a great help and safeguard in their federal organisation. The different, sometimes conflicting, interests and social systems of the several States made existence as a Union and coalescence into a nation conditional on a constant practice of moderation and compromise. The very elements of disintegration were the best guides in political training. Their children learned the lesson of compromise only too well, and it was the application of it to a question of fundamental morals that cost us our civil war. We learned once for all that compromise makes a good umbrella but a poor roof; that it is a temporary expedient, often wise in party politics, almost sure to be unwise in statesmanship.

Has not the trial of democracy in America proved, on the whole, successful? If it had not, would the Old Town be vexed with any fears of its proving contagious? This trial would have been less severe could it have been made with a people homogeneous in race, language, and traditions, whereas the United States have been called on to absorb and assimilate enormous masses of foreign population, heterogeneous in all these respects, and drawn mainly from that class which might fairly say that the world was not their friend, nor the world's law. The previous condition too often justified the traditional Irishman, who, landing in New York and asked what his politics were, inquired if there was a Government there, and on being told that there was, retorted, "Thin I'm agin it!" We have taken from Europe the poorest, the most ignorant, the most turbulent of her people, and have made them over into good citizens, who have added to our wealth, and who are ready to die in defence of a country and of institutions which they know to be worth dying for. The exceptions have been (and they are lamentable exceptions) where these hordes of ignorance and poverty have coagulated in great cities. But the social system is yet to seek which has not to look the same terrible wolf in the eyes. On the other hand, at this very moment Irish peasants are buying up the worn-out farms of Massachusetts,

and making them productive again by the same virtues of industry and thrift that once made them profitable to the English ancestors of the men who are deserting them. To have achieved even these prosaic results (if you choose to call them so), and that out of materials the most discordant —I might say the most recalcitrant—argues a certain beneficent virtue in the system that could do it, and is not to be accounted for by mere luck. Carlyle said scornfully that America meant only roast turkey every day for everybody. He forgot that States, as Bacon said of wars, go on their bellies. As for the security of property, it should be tolerably well secured in a country where every other man hopes to be rich, even though the only property qualification be the ownership of two hands that add to the general wealth. Is it not the best security for anything to interest the largest possible number of persons in its preservation and the smallest in its division? In point of fact, far-seeing men count the increasing power of wealth and its combinations as one of the chief dangers with which the institutions of the United States are threatened in the not distant future. The right of individual property is no doubt the very corner-stone of civilisation as hitherto understood, but I am a little impatient of being told that property is entitled to exceptional consideration because it bears all the burdens of the State. It bears those, indeed, which can most easily be borne, but poverty pays with its person the chief expenses of war, pestilence, and famine. Wealth should not forget this, for poverty is beginning to think of it now and then. Let me not be misunderstood. I see as clearly as any man possibly can, and rate as highly, the value of wealth, and of hereditary wealth, as the security of refinement, the feeder of all those arts that ennoble and beautify life, and as making a country worth living in. Many an ancestral hall here in England has been a nursery of that culture which has been of example and benefit to all. Old gold has a civilising virtue which new gold must grow old to be capable of secreting.

I should not think of coming before you to defend or to criticise any form of government. All have their virtues, all their defects, and all have illustrated one period or another in the history of the race, with signal services to humanity and culture. There is not one that could stand a cynical

cross-examination by an experienced criminal lawyer, except that of a perfectly wise and perfectly good despot, such as the world has never seen, except in that white-haired king of Browning's, who

> Lived long ago
> In the morning of the world,
> When Earth was nearer Heaven than now.

The English race, if they did not invent government by discussion, have at least carried it nearest to perfection in practice. It seems a very safe and reasonable contrivance for occupying the attention of the country, and is certainly a better way of settling questions than by push of pike. Yet, if one should ask it why it should not rather be called government by gabble, it would have to fumble in its pocket a good while before it found the change for a convincing reply. As matters stand, too, it is beginning to be doubtful whether Parliament and Congress sit at Westminster and Washington or in the editors' rooms of the leading journals, so thoroughly is everything debated before the authorised and responsible debaters get on their legs. And what shall we say of government by a majority of voices? To a person who in the last century would have called himself an Impartial Observer, a numerical preponderance seems, on the whole, as clumsy a way of arriving at truth as could well be devised, but experience has apparently shown it to be a convenient arrangement for determining what may be expedient or advisable or practicable at any given moment. Truth, after all, wears a different face to everybody, and it would be too tedious to wait till all were agreed. She is said to lie at the bottom of a well, for the very reason, perhaps, that whoever looks down in search of her sees his own image at the bottom, and is persuaded not only that he has seen the goddess, but that she is far better-looking than he had imagined.

The arguments against universal suffrage are equally unanswerable. "What," we exclaim, "shall Tom, Dick, and Harry have as much weight in the scale as I?" Of course, nothing could be more absurd. And yet universal suffrage has not been the instrument of greater unwisdom than contrivances of a more select description. Assemblies could be mentioned composed entirely of Masters of Arts and Doctors

in Divinity which have sometimes shown traces of human passion or prejudice in their votes. Have the Serene Highnesses and Enlightened Classes carried on the business of Mankind so well, then, that there is no use in trying a less costly method? The democratic theory is that those Constitutions are likely to prove steadiest which have the broadest base, that the right to vote makes a safety-valve of every voter, and that the best way of teaching a man how to vote is to give him the chance of practice. For the question is no longer the academic one, "Is it wise to give every man the ballot?" but rather the practical one, "Is it prudent to deprive whole classes of it any longer?" It may be conjectured that it is cheaper in the long run to lift men up than to hold them down, and that the ballot in their hands is less dangerous to society than a sense of wrong in their heads. At any rate this is the dilemma to which the drift of opinion has been for some time sweeping us, and in politics a dilemma is a more unmanageable thing to hold by the horns than a wolf by the ears. It is said that the right of suffrage is not valued when it is indiscriminately bestowed, and there may be some truth in this, for I have observed that what men prize most is a privilege, even if it be that of chief mourner at a funeral. But is there not danger that it will be valued at more than its worth if denied, and that some illegitimate way will be sought to make up for the want of it? Men who have a voice in public affairs are at once affiliated with one or other of the great parties between which society is divided, merge their individual hopes and opinions in its safer, because more generalised, hopes and opinions, are disciplined by its tactics, and acquire, to a certain degree, the orderly qualities of an army. They no longer belong to a class, but to a body corporate. Of one thing, at least, we may be certain, that, under whatever method of helping things to go wrong man's wit can contrive, those who have the divine right to govern will be found to govern in the end, and that the highest privilege to which the majority of mankind can aspire is that of being governed by those wiser than they. Universal suffrage has in the United States sometimes been made the instrument of inconsiderate changes, under the notion of reform, and this from a misconception of the true meaning of popular government. One of these has been the substitution in many of the States of popular election for official selection

in the choice of judges. The same system applied to military officers was the source of much evil during our civil war, and, I believe, had to be abandoned. But it has been also true that on all great questions of national policy a reserve of prudence and discretion has been brought out at the critical moment to turn the scale in favour of a wiser decision. An appeal to the reason of the people has never been known to fail in the long run. It is, perhaps, true that, by effacing the principle of passive obedience, democracy, ill understood, has slackened the spring of that ductility to discipline which is essential to " The unity and married calm of States." But I feel assured that experience and necessity will cure this evil, as they have shown their power to cure others. And under what frame of policy have evils ever been remedied till they became intolerable, and shook men out of their indolent indifference through their fears ?

We are told that the inevitable result of democracy is to sap the foundations of personal independence, to weaken the principle of authority, to lessen the respect due to eminence, whether in station, virtue, or genius. If these things were so, society could not hold together. Perhaps the best forcing-house of robust individuality would be where public opinion is inclined to be most overbearing, as he must be of heroic temper who should walk along Piccadilly at the height of the season in a soft hat. As for authority, it is one of the symptoms of the time that the religious reverence for it is declining everywhere, but this is due partly to the fact that state-craft is no longer looked upon as a mystery, but as a business, and partly to the decay of superstition, by which I mean the habit of respecting what we are told to respect rather than what is respectable in itself. There is more rough and tumble in the American democracy than is altogether agreeable to people of sensitive nerves and refined habits, and the people take their political duties lightly and laughingly, as is, perhaps, neither unnatural nor unbecoming in a young giant. Democracies can no more jump away from their own shadows than the rest of us can. They no doubt sometimes make mistakes and pay honour to men who do not deserve it. But they do this because they believe them worthy of it, and though it be true that the idol is the measure of the worshipper, yet the worship has in it the germ of a nobler religion. But is it democracies

alone that fall into these errors? I, who have seen it proposed to erect a statue to Hudson, the railway king, and have heard Louis Napoleon hailed as the saviour of society by men who certainly had no democratic associations or leanings, am not ready to think so. But democracies have likewise their finer instincts. I have also seen the wisest statesman and most pregnant speaker of our generation, a man of humble birth and ungainly manners, of little culture beyond what his own genius supplied, become more absolute in power than any monarch of modern times through the reverence of his countrymen for his honesty, his wisdom, his sincerity, his faith in God and man, and the nobly humane simplicity of his character. And I remember another whom popular respect enveloped as with a halo, the least vulgar of men, the most austerely genial, and the most independent of opinion. Wherever he went he never met a stranger, but everywhere neighbours and friends proud of him as their ornament and decoration. Institutions which could bear and breed such men as Lincoln and Emerson had surely some energy for good. No, amid all the fruitless turmoil and miscarriage of the world, if there be one thing steadfast and of favourable omen, one thing to make optimism distrust its own obscure distrust, it is the rooted instinct in men to admire what is better and more beautiful than themselves. The touchstone of political and social institutions is their ability to supply them with worthy objects of this sentiment, which is the very tap-root of civilisation and progress. There would seem to be no readier way of feeding it with the elements of growth and vigour than such an organisation of society as will enable men to respect themselves, and so to justify them in respecting others.

Such a result is quite possible under other conditions than those of an avowedly democratical Constitution. For I take it that the real essence of democracy was fairly enough defined by the First Napoleon when he said that the French Revolution meant "la carrière ouverte aux talents"—a clear pathway for merit of whatever kind. I should be inclined to paraphrase this by calling democracy that form of society, no matter what its political classification, in which every man had a chance and knew that he had it. If a man can climb, and feels himself encouraged to climb, from a coalpit to the highest position for which he is fitted, he can well afford to be indifferent what

name is given to the government under which he lives. The Bailli of Mirabeau, uncle of the more famous tribune of that name, wrote in 1771 : " The English are, in my opinion, a hundred times more agitated and more unfortunate than the very Algerines themselves, because they do not know and will not know till the destruction of their over-swollen power, which I believe very near, whether they are monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, and wish to play the part of all three." England has not been obliging enough to fulfil the Bailli's prophecy, and perhaps it was this very carelessness about the name, and concern about the substance of popular government, this skill in getting the best out of things as they are, in utilising all the motives which influence men, and in giving one direction to many impulses, that has been a principal factor of her greatness and power. Perhaps it is fortunate to have an unwritten Constitution, for men are prone to be tinkering the work of their own hands, whereas they are more willing to let time and circumstance mend or modify what time and circumstance have made. All free governments, whatever their name, are in reality governments by public opinion, and it is on the quality of this public opinion that their prosperity depends. It is, therefore, their first duty to purify the element from which they draw the breath of life. With the growth of democracy grows also the fear, if not the danger, that this atmosphere may be corrupted with poisonous exhalations from lower and more malarious levels, and the question of sanitation becomes more instant and pressing. Democracy in its best sense is merely the letting in of light and air. Lord Sherbrooke, with his usual epigrammatic terseness, bids you educate your future rulers. But would this alone be a sufficient safeguard ? To educate the intelligence is to enlarge the horizon of its desires and wants. And it is well that this should be so. But the enterprise must go deeper and prepare the way for satisfying those desires and wants in so far as they are legitimate. What is really ominous of danger to the existing order of things is not democracy (which, properly understood, is a conservative force), but the Socialism, which may find a fulcrum in it. If we cannot equalise conditions and fortunes any more than we can equalise the brains of men—and a very sagacious person has said that " where two men ride on a horse one must ride behind "—we can yet, perhaps,

do something to correct those methods and influences that lead to enormous inequalities, and to prevent their growing more enormous. It is all very well to pooh-pooh Mr. George and to prove him mistaken in his political economy. I do not believe that land should be divided because the quantity of it is limited by nature. Of what may this not be said? *A fortiori*, we might on the same principle insist on a division of human wit, for I have observed that the quantity of this has been even more inconveniently limited. Mr. George himself has an inequitably large share of it. But he is right in his impelling motive; right, also, I am convinced, in insisting that humanity makes a part, by far the most important part, of political economy; and in thinking man to be of more concern and more convincing than the longest columns of figures in the world. For unless you include human nature in your addition, your total is sure to be wrong and your deductions from it fallacious. Communism means barbarism, but Socialism means, or wishes to mean, co-operation and community of interests, sympathy, the giving to the hands not so large a share as to the brains, but a larger share than hitherto in the wealth they must combine to produce—means, in short, the practical application of Christianity to life, and has in it the secret of an orderly and benign reconstruction. State Socialism would cut off the very roots in personal character—self-help, forethought, and frugality—which nourish and sustain the trunk and branches of every vigorous Commonwealth.

I do not believe in violent changes, nor do I expect them. Things in possession have a very firm grip. One of the strongest cements of society is the conviction of mankind that the state of things into which they are born is a part of the order of the universe, as natural, let us say, as that the sun should go round the earth. It is a conviction that they will not surrender except on compulsion, and a wise society should look to it that this compulsion be not put upon them. For the individual man there is no radical cure, outside of human nature itself, for the evils to which human nature is heir. The rule will always hold good that you must

> Be your own palace or the world's your gaol.

But for artificial evils, for evils that spring from want of thought, thought must find a remedy somewhere. There has

been no period of time in which wealth has been more sensible of its duties than now. It builds hospitals, it establishes missions among the poor, it endows schools. It is one of the advantages of accumulated wealth, and of the leisure it renders possible, that people have time to think of the wants and sorrows of their fellows. But all these remedies are partial and palliative merely. It is as if we should apply plasters to a single pustule of the small-pox with a view of driving out the disease. The true way is to discover and to extirpate the germs. As society is now constituted these are in the air it breathes, in the water it drinks, in things that seem, and which it has always believed, to be the most innocent and healthful. The evil elements it neglects corrupt these in their springs and pollute them in their courses. Let us be of good cheer, however, remembering that the misfortunes hardest to bear are those which never come. The world has outlived much, and will outlive a great deal more, and men have contrived to be happy in it. It has shown the strength of its constitution in nothing more than in surviving the quack medicines it has tried. In the scales of the destinies brawn will never weigh so much as brain. Our healing is not in the storm or in the whirlwind, it is not in monarchies, or aristocracies, or democracies, but will be revealed by the still, small voice that speaks to the conscience and the heart, prompting us to a wider and wiser humanity.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL came into the House of Commons as Member for the family borough of Woodstock when the Conservative party won their great triumph at the General Election of 1874. But the part which he took in that Parliament was insignificant, and it was not until the tables had been turned by Mr. Gladstone's victory in 1880 that he came to the front as a debater of singular force. His success was immediate, and though it was partly due to his own personal qualities, there were also external circumstances which assisted him. After the death of Lord Beaconsfield in 1881 the Conservatives had no single head. Lord Salisbury led them in the House of Peers, Sir Stafford Northcote led them in the House of Commons. It occurred to Lord Randolph Churchill that there was a good opportunity for the development of a new policy in vigorous and energetic hands. It cannot be denied that there was much to support this view. On the one hand, the latest General Election had tended to discredit the authority of those whose proceedings it had condemned. On the other hand, the Liberal party, and even the Liberal Cabinet, appeared to contain within themselves elements so discordant that to set them against each other might not be a difficult task. In 1874 Disraeli had a magnificent opportunity. Both Houses of Parliament were at his absolute disposal. In 1875 Gladstone retired from the Leadership of the Liberal party, and his successor, Lord Hartington, was not the man to take an enterprising initiative of his own. Moreover, Lord Hartington could claim no authority outside the House of Commons. It was there, and there only, that he succeeded Gladstone. Liberals and Radicals throughout the country, who would have responded at once to any call from Gladstone himself, as indeed soon appeared, were not inclined to be enthusiastic on behalf of any other chief. In 1880 they

voted for Gladstone and against Disraeli. But with them were associated men, represented in Parliament out of all proportion to their numbers, who differed far more from Radicals than from Tories, and sincerely regretted Gladstone's return. Lord Randolph Churchill regarded the existence of this section as promising well for the future of a new party which could strike out a line of its own. He had two great qualifications of a popular leader. In the first place he could produce striking phrases which told at the time, and were remembered afterwards. When he said that, if Home Rule were passed, "Ulster would fight, and Ulster would be right"; when he called Mr. Gladstone "an old man in a hurry"; when he nicknamed the Home Rulers "Separatists," he achieved success with minds which mere argument might never have reached. In discerning the need for social reform, and its capabilities as the policy of a party, he looked much further ahead than his colleagues. His differences with his former leaders had developed his combative instincts, and increased his controversial powers. The speech which follows is particularly interesting, because it shows that Lord Randolph had thought out for himself just before his resignation a definite and constructive policy for the future.

Policy of Lord Salisbury's Second Ministry

Dartford, October 2, 1886

I HAVE to return to you my very sincere and earnest thanks for the kind welcome which you have accorded to me this afternoon; and also I have to express my sense of the value which I attach to those recorded expressions of confidence in the form of addresses which the officers of your various associations have been kind enough to present to me. It has been my lot to be called upon to perform duties of a most anxious and difficult nature—duties which would be most anxious and difficult even to those who possessed a long experience and great knowledge of public life, but which to one like me, who has no

great experience of public affairs, and who has not been many years in Parliament, are, indeed, duties so anxious and so difficult that they could not be at all adequately performed unless I thought that I was sustained by a considerable body of public approval in this country. Undoubtedly addresses like those which you have given me are of immense value in signifying to me that I have not, at any rate, forfeited as yet any large measure of public confidence. It is my most pleasing duty, not only on my own behalf, but on behalf of Her Majesty's present Government, to offer you our cordial and sincere congratulations on the signal and memorable victory which your exertions gained for the constitutional party at the general elections of 1885 and 1886. I do not know whether you have studied the statistics of the growth of constitutional principles in this great county of Kent. In the year 1868—when Mr. Disraeli appealed to the country after having passed a large measure of electoral reform—there were returned to Parliament from this county thirteen Liberals against eight Tories. In the year 1874 there was a slight improvement, because there were returned to Parliament thirteen Tories against eight Liberals. In 1880—a very dark year for the Conservative party—Kent held her own, for you returned sixteen Tories to Parliament against five Liberals; and in 1885, out of nineteen constituencies in the county of Kent, you did not return one single Gladstonian candidate, but, by large, by overwhelming, by crushing, majorities, you returned to Parliament eighteen Conservatives and one Liberal Unionist, and that unequalled position you managed to sustain at the last general election. That is really only a sign of what has been going on all over the country. There has been going on over the whole country a steady and sure growth of constitutional principles, a steady and increasing indication of a popular belief in the value of the British Constitution. But I attach particular importance to this adhesion of the county of Kent to the Constitutional cause. The county of Kent is a county with many most interesting traditions—a county which is well termed the garden of England. It is a county of great wealth, of great homogeneity, and it is a county, if I may use such an expression, of immense individuality. Mr. Gladstone claims that he has got on his side the whole of the civilised world. Well, gentlemen, I reply that he is welcome to the whole of the civilised world:

but give me the county of Kent. I am not aware that the civilised world has any concrete voting power in the House of Commons, but I am aware that the county of Kent has a concrete voting power of nineteen members on the Constitutional side, and I say to Mr. Gladstone, "You are perfectly welcome to the civilised world, and make as much as you can out of it, as long as you leave us the nineteen representatives of the county of Kent." We must beware of one thing, however: we must not dwell too fondly on the past. Politics is not a science of the past; politics is the science of the future. You must use the past as a lever with which to manufacture the future. Politics is not a profession which consists in looking back; it is not a profession which consists in standing still; it is in this country essentially a profession of progress. Therefore, we must use our great victories in the past as a means of attaining others in the future; and I would warn you most earnestly against the dangers of over-confidence. It was over-confidence more than anything else which ruined the Conservative party in the year 1880. Seat after seat was thrown away at that time because members of the Conservative party and Conservative organisations thought that their power was irresistible, and that it was not necessary for them to make an effort. We have before us now a long road to travel. We have many ranges of political mountains of great difficulty to cross, and we must remember that "he that putteth on his harness must not boast as he that taketh it off." Our journey has only just begun; but there is much which ought to encourage us along our road. They say that a good beginning makes a good ending, and I think we have made a good beginning in this last session of Parliament. It will interest you to know that the present Government, which only commands a nominal majority over the Separatist Opposition of ninety votes, has been supported in forty-three divisions in the last session by an average majority of 100 votes. That is a satisfactory commencement. I do not know that we can look to maintaining that majority through the sessions that are to come; but, at any rate, there we have got it up to now—an average recorded majority in support of the present Government of 100 members of the House of Commons. Undoubtedly, gentlemen, that has been greatly due to the unparalleled sacrifices and to the unequalled devotion of the Tory members

to their duties in the House of Commons, at a time of the year when a performance of those duties was attended with every trial and every labour that you can imagine. It has also been due to the loyal support which we have received from the whole party of the Liberal Unionists.

Upon this fine autumn afternoon I do not propose to waste your time by alluding at length to the Separatist Opposition in the House of Commons. I really do not think they are worth powder and shot. An Opposition—a Parliamentary Opposition—more hopelessly demoralised, more hopelessly disintegrated, I have never seen and I have never read of. They have no leader, and they have no policy. Perhaps I am wrong in saying that, and I ought to have put it in another way—they suffer from having too many leaders. The conduct of the Parliamentary Opposition reminds me of what used to be the conduct in the old days of the Dutch army. There used to be in command of the Dutch army a council of Dutch generals, and every day a new general took it in turn to command, and the consequence was that the Dutch army invariably suffered defeat. And so with the Parliamentary Opposition in the House of Commons. You have one day Mr. Parnell leading, and another day you have Mr. Labouchere, and another day you have Mr. Conybeare leading, and every now and then you have Sir William Harcourt leading, and occasionally, as a great treat, Mr. Gladstone drops in from Bavaria. They suffer from a plethora of leaders. Perhaps I was also wrong in saying they have no policy. They have a policy, and their policy is this—to bring into discredit, to put a stop to, and, if possible, to demolish and destroy all Parliamentary government. That is their policy. I do not care how long they pursue that policy, because it is a policy which is doomed to failure. It is a policy which the British constituencies will never support, because they are attached to their Parliament, they are proud of their Parliament, and they are determined that their Parliament shall maintain the traditions which have been handed down to it. So much for the Parliamentary Opposition. Let me invite your attention to a more business-like question. Let me ask you for your patience and indulgence while I examine with some detail the policy which the Government has pursued, and which it hopes to pursue.

The policy which the Government has pursued up to now

has been called by our opponents "a policy of Royal Commissions." I do not in the least regard that taunt. There is a very old proverb, "do not prophesy until you know." I will tell you a much better proverb, and I will take out a patent for it, and it is this: "Do not legislate unless you know." Now Mr. Gladstone—(a Voice: "We are sick of his name")—I am afraid you will hear his name more than once in the course of my remarks. But the great feature of the legislation of that gentleman, whose name you are so sick of, was that he legislated by intuition, whereas the Conservative party, or, rather, the Unionist party, are determined to legislate only upon ascertained facts. You are aware that we have appointed four principal Commissions to inquire into four great subjects. We have appointed two Commissions for Ireland—one to examine into the operation of the recent land laws which have been passed for that country—a subject of most bitter and conflicting controversy—a subject upon which, without sound information, it would be impossible and insane for a Government to move. We have also appointed a Commission to investigate the capacity of Ireland for development by public works on a remunerative scale, and by the support of public credit. That is a Commission from which I hope great things for the future of Ireland; and although the Parnellite party poured every kind of ridicule upon it, you may depend upon it that there are resources in Ireland which may be scientifically developed by the use of State credit, and the development of which must bring to the people of that country a large measure of prosperity. Let us take the United Kingdom. On two questions we have appointed Commissions to inquire, and they are two questions of great public interest. In the first place, we want to know to what extent this long commercial and agricultural depression may have been influenced, or caused, or affected by the great changes in the relative value of the precious metals. That is a subject most complicated, most difficult, and most mysterious and dark. It is a subject upon which sound scientific information is absolutely essential. Then there is another inquiry, in which I take the greatest interest. We have appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the scale and cost of our system of government in this country. We know that the expenditure of this country has been increasing rapidly, and we want to be certain on one

point—that we get our money's worth for the taxes which we spend; and we want to be perfectly certain that it is not in our power to make considerable reductions and simplifications of that expenditure. I do not know, gentlemen, what your opinions may be, but I frankly own that I anticipate much good from all these inquiries; and I feel certain that before long these inquiries will provide your Parliament with sound material for beneficial legislation.

I turn to the policy of the future. The main principle of that policy—and I pray you to bear this in mind, gentlemen—the main principle and the guiding motive of the policy of the Government in the future will be to maintain intact and unimpaired the union of the Unionist party. We know how much depends—how almost entirely the future of England depends—upon the union of the Unionist party; how every institution which we value, how all the liberties which we prize, are for the time bound up in the union of that party; and everything that we do, either in domestic or foreign affairs, will be subordinated to that cardinal principle, the union of the Unionist party. We know this, gentlemen—and I am not ashamed to state it before this great meeting—that we, the present Government, owe much of our existence and much of our efficiency to the Unionist Liberals. We recognise to the full the great sacrifices those gentlemen made—political sacrifices such as none of us have been called upon to undergo. We know well the odium they have incurred among their former political friends, and we consider it is our duty as a Government so to adapt our policy as to prove to the British people that the Unionist Liberals were right in the course which they took, and were justified in the great political sacrifices which they made. I wish that they had found it in their power to join us effectively in the heavy labours of government. I regret that they have not yet found it in their power to share with us Ministerial responsibilities. But, at any rate, it is our business to interpret their action on the best and highest ground for them, to attribute to their action the loftiest and most honourable motives, and to believe they are animated by no other desire than to maintain pure and intact their political power and independence, so as to rescue the great Liberal party—which has so sadly gone astray—from all the heresies and all the terrible errors into which Mr. Gladstone

has led them. Once more I repeat, so that you may bear it in your memories, that the main, the guiding principle of the policy of the Government will be to preserve the union of the Unionist party.

Let us assume, for the purpose of this meeting, that the Government have been successful in effecting reforms in Parliamentary procedure and in laying the foundation for future legislation, and let us consider for a moment the various subjects of legislation which the present Government ought, in justice to the country, to undertake with honesty and energy. I think we ought to give a chief place to the legislative requirements of England and Scotland. Ireland has occupied—I may say, has monopolised—the time of Parliament during the last ten years nearly, and the requirements of England and Scotland have been much neglected, and great arrears of legislation have accumulated; and I think that it is the business of the Government to commence at once dealing with those arrears. There is one matter which seems to come first. I think you will all be of opinion that the Government will be justified in asking the attention of the House of Commons to legislation which will enable them and their supporters to redeem the promises and pledges which they have made to the agricultural labourers of England. And it is the decided intention of the Government to introduce into Parliament a measure which should provide facilities, through the operation of local authorities, for the acquisition by the agricultural labourer of freehold plots and allotments of land. I do not think that there ought to be much difficulty in passing such a measure. There is a great agreement among all parties as to the main lines of the measure, and I do not in the least wish to detract from any credit which may be justly given to men like Mr. Jesse Collings or Mr. Chamberlain, who were foremost in bringing this subject before the public mind of England. My hope is that that will be one of the first subjects dealt with by the present Government in the next session. There is another measure closely connected with that, and that is legislation by which facilities should be afforded for the sale of glebe lands. That is intimately connected with the allotment question. Not only would it, I think, have a beneficial effect upon the incomes of the clergy, as providing them with incomes more regular and more secure than what they obtain

now from the cultivation or the letting of their glebe lands, but also those glebe lands would in many villages and many parts of England afford most convenient morsels of land to be divided among the agricultural labourers, either for freehold plots, or for allotments, or for cottage gardens; and that is a measure which I hope the Government will be able to introduce early next session. Now I come to a matter which is of great importance to you in Kent. I come to the question of tithes. The good sense of the people of Kent has settled, I understand, in an equitable and satisfactory manner to all parties, the question which threatened in Kent to be a somewhat thorny one—the question of extraordinary tithes. And it will be necessary for the Government to give its attention to the general question of tithes over the whole of England and Wales. This much may perhaps be admitted, that the settlement of the tithe question which Parliament carried out about a generation ago, has not proved, on the whole, in its working, to be a complete settlement; and it would appear that the intentions of Parliament at that time, with regard to the payment of tithe, have not been altogether attained. I understand, however, from those who are well acquainted with the question, and who represent the receivers of the tithe, that it ought not to be difficult to provide a much more simple and much more direct mode of payment of the tithe, and a method which should not in any degree prove to be a vexatious or harassing method to the occupier of land. That is all I can say upon the tithe question now, but I rather expect that by legislation on the question, without doing any injustice to either the landlords or the clergy, it may be possible for a great majority of the landlords of this country to take upon themselves the direct burden of the incidence of tithe.

There is another measure which I hope the Government may be able to deal with, and which, I believe, is one of great interest to many here. It is of enormous interest to the agricultural community—I mean the question of railway rates. I do not think there ought to be very great difficulty in coming to an agreement upon the question of the incidence of railway rates. The late Government had a Bill in hand for dealing with the question, and the present Government have a Bill in hand for that purpose; and my own belief is, that if the railway companies are approached fairly, if they are treated with justice

and with consideration, they would not be unwilling to co-operate in a more equitable regulation of the railway rates as regards the commercial and agricultural interests of this country. The railway rates at the present moment operate in a way which Parliament did not intend when it gave the railway companies their powers. Without doubt they somehow manage to give to the foreign importer and to the foreign producer unfair advantages over the home producer. It is a difficult question, and the railway companies, like other corporations or property-holders, have rights which have been conferred on them by Parliament, and arbitrary and unjust treatment of them would strike a blow at all property in this country, and would react on the very interest you desire to serve. But still, I would say to the railway companies, they had better bear in mind the scriptural text: "Agree with your adversary quickly; while you are in the way with him." Because if the present grievances which the commercial and the manufacturing and the agricultural community complain of with regard to the regulations of railway rates are suffered to go on undealt with, and growing and developing, then it is possible that the rights and the property of railway companies may be placed in jeopardy. Those measures which I have alluded to are all, I think, though important, nevertheless minor measures—measures which ought not to excite great party controversy, and which ought to be passed without much difficulty through Parliament. And they are measures which certainly are urgently demanded. There is another measure which the country requires also, and that is a measure which shall provide for a cheaper mode of land transfer and for cheaper methods of acquiring landed property by the individual, and for the registration of title. All I can say on that point is this, that the Lord Chancellor of the present Government is enthusiastic on the question, and I understand that he has ideas. And you may depend upon it that when a Lord Chancellor of England is enthusiastic on any question, and has ideas with regard to that question, it would be a bold, courageous, and clever man who will stop the Lord Chancellor's way. Therefore I think you may look forward with some confidence to a satisfactory measure upon this important question being introduced in the House of Lords early next session.

Then there is the great question which overshadows all

others, and which will absorb all the time and energies of the Government, and that is the establishment in our country districts of a genuinely popular form of local government. That is a question which we do not intend to trifle or to tamper with. It is the decided intention of the Government to take it up in earnest, and to endeavour to arrive at a settlement of it. It includes two very large questions indeed. It includes some comprehensive rearrangement and readjustment of the incidence of local taxation, and it includes some provision by which personal property shall be brought into the area of local taxation, and shall be called upon to contribute a far more equal share than it does now in the expenses of local government. The question of local government also includes another very large and thorny question. I will not now enter into the complexities of that matter, but I believe it is possible for your local bodies, if properly constituted, to settle most of the difficulties and most of the controversies which have arisen around the question of licensing. At any rate, I think the time has come when, by an agreement of all parties—except enthusiasts and fanatics—a real and genuine move forward can be made.

There is another point in which I am specially interested, which I cannot omit to notice. I am specially interested in it from the office which I have the honour to hold. I will not conceal from you that my own special object, to which I hope to devote whatever energy and strength or influence I may possess, is to endeavour to attain some genuine and considerable reduction of public expenditure, and consequent reduction of taxation. I have not the time, nor have I yet the information, which would enable me to go further into this matter now; but I frankly confess that I shall be bitterly disappointed if it is not in my power after one year, or, at any rate, two years, to show to the public that a very honest and a very earnest effort has been attended with practical and sensible results. I think you will all agree with me that with regard to the programme of legislation I have provided you with, it is a programme more than sufficient for one session of Parliament. Indeed, I think I have probably sketched out the work of two sessions of Parliament; because you must remember that in addition to all these matters you will probably have to consider in a practical manner further reforms of the land laws

of Ireland. The land laws of Ireland were recently reformed in a hasty and impulsive manner. There are many imperfections in the land system of Ireland at present. The system of double ownership in Ireland is a system which cannot last long. The process of change from double to single ownership must somehow be accelerated if you wish to produce peace in Ireland. But, in addition to that, you will have to endeavour, in this Parliament at any rate, to lay the foundation of a system of popular local government in Ireland—a very large question to solve, very difficult on which to obtain the co-operation of different parties, but a question which no Government and no party can agree to shirk. In addition to that there is another question which will very shortly come up for consideration—a question affecting the agricultural community. I refer to the question of popular elementary education. That is now being examined into by a Royal Commission, and until that Commission reports no government can act. But when the report comes up, and when it has been considered and digested, you will find that legislation on popular elementary education is urgently demanded by very large masses of our people.

I have told you that the prospects of the Government are very fair, but I have also told you that the work which is before the Government is very heavy. It is so heavy that, if the prospects of the Government were not fair, that work would be almost appalling. But there are matters which are absolutely outside the range of legislation, which no Parliament, and which, to some extent no Government, can touch. A nation does not live by legislation alone; there are other matters, beyond the control of Parliament and of Government, and in that area of subjects which is outside the reach of Ministers or of parties I find one most cheering and encouraging fact, which I feel it my duty to bring to your notice. There are distinct and definite symptoms of a real revival of trade, and of commercial enterprise in this country. Now, if this revival is continued, you may depend upon it, it will very soon react upon the agricultural community and the agricultural interest, which is very dear to some here, because if we can once more restore some measure of prosperity and activity to our manufacturing towns, you will have almost immediately a great demand for, and a great consumption of, agricultural produce. If we can only get the town population to work in this country,

you may depend upon it we shall soon have the rural districts busy and prosperous. This revival of trade is shown by many trustworthy signs. It is shown, in the first place, by great commercial activity in America. Our American friends are always ahead of everybody else, and what I hope is, that they may not, by their over-zeal and activity, spoil what promises to be a good future, and that they will not be led into over-speculation, which may produce panic and further depression. But the revival is also shown by the revenue returns. I prefer not to dwell upon those returns in detail at present, for to some extent they would be illusory, and my impression might be mistaken; but still the revenue returns do show signs of a revival of trade in this country; and there is also this great fact, that the great merchants and the great warehouse proprietors of this country are now beginning to find that their accumulations of stocks of manufactured and of raw materials are becoming exhausted. Upon these accumulations they have traded for some years, and they have become exhausted and their stock requires replenishing; and that being so, and nearly all being in the same position, they are running into the market to replenish their stocks, and consequently you have a healthy and natural rise in prices. It seems certain that there is a revival of trade going on—a revival which seems to be a real revival; and it would not be rash or premature to say that we have perhaps, at last, touched the bottom of this terrible and protracted commercial and agricultural depression under which we have been so many years labouring. But there is one thing which is necessary to a real revival of trade which is to endure and which is to increase. The people of this country must have a Government in which they have confidence. Confidence is necessary—absolutely vital—to all enterprise, agricultural or commercial. The people of this country must know that they have a Government which will preserve law and order. They must know that they have a Government which does not intend to be squeezed, which does not intend to be frightened, by any passing or transitory clamour, or by the noise of faction. They must have a Government which will recall from their starry exile those laws of political economy which Mr. Gladstone so summarily banished. They must have a Government in office which will respect the rights of property, and which has consideration for the sanctity of

contract. For years in England you have had no such Government, and the absence of such a Government has aggravated the commercial depression. I do earnestly believe and hope that you have such a Government now; and if that belief of mine becomes at all general, and at all popular, this revival of trade will progress speedily and merrily.

Now, you will be glad to hear that I am drawing near the close of my remarks. There are on the political horizon—otherwise an horizon as fair almost as that which stretches before me this fine autumn afternoon—there are on the political horizon two dark clouds, which may develop into storm and hurricane, which may shatter the brightest prospects, and destroy all the best and wisest calculations. I allude specially to the social condition of Ireland and to the aspect of foreign policy. In Ireland, I regret to say, you have the agitators hard at work, determined to leave that country no peace, no rest from political agitation. You have these agitators, led by Mr. Gladstone and by Mr. Parnell, who, you may be certain, will stick at nothing, and will recoil from nothing, which may make the government of the Queen impossible in Ireland. They have declared that it is not in the power of the British Government and the British Parliament to govern Ireland, and they will do all they know to make good their assertion. I believe their iniquitous, their unscrupulous, projects will fail. I believe, and I hope, their plans will be utterly confounded; and I base my hopes and belief upon two or three good reasons, which I will give to you. In the first place, the difficulty of Ireland is mainly an agrarian and agricultural difficulty. Whatever evils the legislation of 1881 may have had, this much must be said for it, that under it the tenantry of Ireland gained enormous advantages. If Mr. Parnell were to lose the support of the tenantry of Ireland, or if they became lukewarm in his support, or refused to go in for acute agrarian disorder, the power of Mr. Parnell would rapidly fade away. Now mark what the advantages are which the tenantry of Ireland obtained under the Land Act of 1881. Every farmer in Ireland, with the exception of the leaseholder, could get his rent fixed before a court of law upon a scale of prices, and obtain what has been denominated a fair rent. That generally turns out to be a reduction of rent by about 25 per cent. He also gets fixity of tenure, which means a renewable lease of fifteen years,

during which he cannot be disturbed by his landlord; and, moreover, he gets the right to sell to anyone to whom he will, for the highest price he can get, the interest in this lease. You, who are acquainted with agricultural matters, know that these are enormous advantages, and that they represent a definite and considerable money value; and I do not think that the farmers of Ireland are so foolish or so shortsighted as to risk the loss of these great pecuniary advantages, as they would undoubtedly do if they indulged to any large extent in acute agrarian disorder. There is a second reason why I do not think Mr. Parnell's efforts will succeed. They have this year an abundant harvest in Ireland. They have had in Ireland every year since 1880 a bountiful and prosperous harvest, which is more than we can say in England. And they have, consequently, plenty of produce in Ireland, and the quantity of the produce of the land to a certain extent counterbalances the low prices which it fetches. The prices are now recovering, and I learn, on authority, that the price of butter and young stock has made a sensible rise within the last few weeks in Ireland. That is another reason why, I think, there ought not to be any great agrarian disorder in Ireland. My third reason is that I have confidence in the moderation of the Irish landlords. I do not believe that the Irish landlords are so foolish as to play into the hands of Mr. Parnell. I believe all the assertions of Mr. Parnell and his followers, that there will be wholesale and unjust evictions in Ireland, are utterly unfounded and untrue. I believe that the landlords of Ireland are disposed to exercise their rights—the little rights which your Parliament has left them—with all justice and moderation; and you must receive with the greatest caution the statements of the Irish party as to the cruelty of the Irish landlords. Of course, if Mr. Parnell is successful, as he and his party hope to be, in organising a general repudiation of rent all over Ireland, there naturally will be a struggle. But, after all, that is human nature; and if one party chooses to deny and repudiate the legal rights of another, the other party is really justified in endeavouring to show that those legal rights are supported and will be given effect to by the law of the land. But if, during the winter in Ireland, we are not confronted by any no-rent manifesto, if we are not confronted by any general no-rent movement, then I am as certain as that I am standing before you that the

landlords of Ireland will, by no action of theirs, provoke the anger of their tenantry, and will not have recourse to harsh or unjust evictions, and will not, in the great majority of cases, endeavour to exact rents which, from one cause or another, it may be impossible to pay. For all these reasons I am of opinion that Mr. Parnell's programme will probably fail. I hope it will. And I have great hopes of the immediate future in Ireland. I think that the Irish people know that they have a Government in power who are absolutely determined at all costs, and in spite of any danger—political or otherwise—to preserve law, to maintain the law, to assert the rights of property, and to preserve order. From that duty on no consideration whatever will we be made to shrink. No longer will we tolerate that the state of Ireland shall continue to be a disgrace to England and a blot upon the fair fame and character of the British Empire. Law and order must be made to prevail in Ireland; but the Irish people are very quick and very shrewd. They know when a Government is in earnest; and my belief is that, directly or indirectly, large classes and large bodies of the Irish people will co-operate with the Government in their endeavours to restore order in Ireland, and, therefore, although I go back to my original proposition and state that the prospect in Ireland is gloomy and menacing to some extent, yet I have great hopes for the future, and I do see real and clear signs of daylight which may lead one to expect a better and brighter future in Ireland.

Of the state of foreign affairs I regret I am not able to speak to you with such confidence. Far more serious, perhaps, than any other matter is the state of things which has arisen in Bulgaria. In the autumn of last year, when Lord Salisbury was at the Foreign Office, we had every reason to hope that the union of Eastern Roumelia with Bulgaria under the sovereignty of Prince Alexander would develop a prosperous and independent nation, in the growing strength of which might ultimately be found a peaceful and true solution of the Eastern Question. These hopes have been for the moment to a great extent dashed. A brutal and cowardly conspiracy, consummated before the young community had had time to consolidate itself, was successful in this, that it paralysed the growing authority of the Prince, and deprived Bulgaria of an honoured and trusted leader. At the present moment the freedom and

independence of Bulgaria, as well as of the kingdoms of Servia and Roumania, would appear to be seriously compromised. This grave question is undoubtedly attracting much public attention in this country. It has been said by some, and even by persons of authority and influence, that in the issues which are involved England has no material interest. Such an assertion would appear to me to be far too loose and general. The sympathy of England with liberty, and with the freedom and independence of communities and nationalities, is of ancient origin, and has become the traditional direction of our foreign policy. The policy based on this strong sympathy is not so purely sentimental as a careless critic might suppose. It would be more correct, indeed, to describe such a policy as particular, and, in a sense, as selfish, for the precious liberties which we enjoy, and the freedom of Europe from tyranny and despotism, are in reality indissolubly connected. To England Europe owes much of her modern popular freedom. It was mainly English effort which rescued Germany and the Netherlands from the despotism of King Philip of Spain, and after him from that of Louis XIV of France. It was English effort which preserved the liberties of Europe from the desolating tyranny of Napoleon. In our own times our own nation has done much, either by direct intervention or by energetic moral support, to establish upon firm foundations the freedom of Italy and of Greece. The policy of Lord Beaconsfield in 1878, so much misrepresented, so much misunderstood, had this for its most conspicuous characteristic, that it rescued the young liberties of the peoples in the Balkan Peninsula, who, having been saved from the frying-pan of Turkish misrule, were in danger of falling into the fire of Russian autocracy. Times and circumstances alter, and the particular policy which may be suitable for one set of circumstances may require to be modified as those circumstances change. A generation ago Germany and Austria were not so sensitive as they are now to the value of political liberty. Nor did they appreciate to its full extent the great stability of institutions which political liberty engenders; and on England devolved the duty —the honourable but dangerous duty—of setting an example and leading the way. Those were the days of Lord Palmerston; but times have changed, and it is evident, from the speech of the Hungarian Prime Minister on Thursday, that the

freedom and the independence of the Danubian Principalities and of the Balkan nationalities are a primary and vital object in the policy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Those things being so, it may well be that England can honourably and safely afford to view with satisfaction that Power whose interests are most directly and vitally concerned assuming the foremost part in this great international work. We must, of course, take it for granted, as I am doing, that the liberty-giving policy of the Treaty of Berlin will be carefully and watchfully protected. Whatever modification this great fact may enable us to make in our foreign policy, whatever diminution of isolated risk or sole responsibility this may enable us to effect, you may be certain of one thing—that there will be no sudden or violent departure by Her Majesty's present Government from those main principles of foreign policy which I have before alluded to, and which for nearly three centuries mark in strong, distinct, and clear lines, the course of the British Empire among the nations of the world. There are Powers in Europe who earnestly and honestly desire to avoid war and to preserve peace, to content themselves with their possessions and their frontiers, and to concentrate their energies on commercial progress and on domestic development. There are other Powers which do not appear to be so fortunately situated, and who, from one cause or another, which it is not necessary to analyse or examine, betray from time to time a regrettable tendency towards contentious and even aggressive action. It is the duty of any British Government to exhaust itself in efforts to maintain the best and most friendly relations with all foreign States, and to lose no opportunity of offering friendly and conciliatory counsels for the purpose of mitigating national rivalries and of peacefully solving international disputes. But should circumstances arise which, from their grave and dangerous nature, should force the Government of the Queen to make a choice, it cannot be doubted that the sympathy and, if necessary, even the support, of England will be given to those Powers who seek the peace of Europe and the liberty of peoples, and in whose favour our timely adhesion would probably, and without the use of force, decide the issue. Our policy in these anxious times—subject always to the cardinal principle of maintaining the union of the Unionist party—will be to pursue an even and steady course, avoiding the

dangers of officious interference and unnecessary initiative on the one hand, and an attitude of selfish and timid isolation on the other. And I earnestly hope that we may be successful in contributing to the preservation of that general peace and security which, however necessary and advantageous it may be for other nations, is absolutely essential to the progress and prosperity of the British Empire.

LORD LYTTON

LORD LYTTON'S speech here given was the first of the few he delivered in the House of Lords. It is a defence of his own policy in the Viceroyalty of India, which he had just resigned. That policy consisted in an attempt to check Russian aggression by establishing British influence over Afghanistan. Lord Lytton, the second peer of the title and the first Earl, was appointed to succeed Lord Northbrook as Governor-General of India in 1876. He was then British Minister at Lisbon. His father, the poet, novelist, and politician, had been one of Disraeli's most intimate friends, famous for his set speeches in the House of Commons, but not a man of much practical influence in politics. The second Lord Lytton was at that time known as a popular diplomatist, the author of brilliant despatches, and a devoted admirer of Disraeli. The experiment of sending him to India was regarded as a bold and interesting one. Disraeli's idea was that India should be governed directly from Downing Street on Imperialist principles, and that the cautious policy of Lord Lawrence should at once be set aside. He knew nothing about India. But his oriental imagination was fired by the dream of re-creating the Great Mogul's Empire, with the forms and pageantry of the past, to be controlled by himself through the instrumentality of a sympathetic friend. Lord Lytton's speech, which follows, is an apology for the failure of his Afghan schemes, and a protest against the abandonment of Candahar, the acquisition of which was then their one tangible result. It is certainly very well designed for its purpose, and is indeed a good example of ingenious pleading for a policy which had encountered fatal obstacles, such as its promoters never foresaw. Lord Lytton, like his father, was a composer of set speeches, which might almost be called essays, and lack the element of spontaneity.

But they show the man, fanciful and romantic, inclined to be a dreamer, and fascinated by the British Empire in India as a picturesque embodiment of infinite possibilities. Lord Lytton had not his father's genius and originality. He was a man who touched life at many points, social, literary, and diplomatic. His easy command of language, the grace and charm of his style, were the setting of an active imagination which gave his politics an unusual and attractive touch of poetic fancy and flow.

The Abandonment of Candahar

House of Lords, Jan. 10, 1881

The Earl of Lytton, in rising, pursuant to Notice, to call the attention of the House to affairs in Afghanistan, and to make a personal statement with reference to his own action as Viceroy of India, in regard to the late Afghan War, said—

My Lords, in addressing your Lordships for the first time, I deeply feel how great is my need for your indulgence; for not only do I lack the Parliamentary experience and ability so eminently possessed by those to whom this House is accustomed to listen upon questions of importance, but my consciousness of this deficiency is increased by a solemn sense of the national magnitude and gravity of the matter about which I have given notice of my desire to call your attention this evening. I am anxious that the terms of that notice should not be misunderstood. The object of it is to lay before the House, as promptly and plainly as I can, considerations which appear to me deserving of the early attention of your Lordships, in consequence of the announcement made to us in the Speech from the Throne that Her Majesty has been advised to abandon the possession of Candahar—a city twice conquered by Her Majesty's troops. But it is not my intention to enter at large into the long history of the war which led to the occupation of Candahar. I shall only refer very briefly to certain matters connected, no doubt, with the story of that war, but which have an essential bearing upon the whole policy of the measure we have been informed of. These matters, and the importance of them, were strongly impressed on my

mind when I was Viceroy of India, and I do not think they have yet received from this House or from this country the emphatic notice of which they seem to me deserving. To that extent, therefore, my remarks will partake of the character of a personal explanation ; and, also, in so far as it is not my intention to conclude them with a motion. For this course I have a strong reason—at least, it is a reason strongly felt by myself. My Lords, I do not think it would be fair either to the present Viceroy or to the present Government, if I endeavoured to-night to elicit from your Lordships a definite, and possibly a premature, opinion upon a measure for which Her Majesty's Ministers and Her Majesty's Viceroy are jointly responsible, and of which neither the motives nor the objects have yet been communicated to us. I have always strongly felt that India ought not to be governed from England—at least, not in the sense of being directly ruled upon the dictatorship, either of Parliamentary Parties, however numerous and enlightened, or even of retired Viceroys, however earnest and experienced, who cannot possibly have that personal familiarity with the constantly fluctuating aspect of Indian affairs which is necessarily possessed by the Governor-General in Council. Holding this opinion, I should, indeed, be sorry if my first act upon my taking my seat in this House were to come impetuously forward with a motion which might, in my own opinion at least, have even an appearance of such a tendency, and, very probably, such a practical effect. My present object, therefore, is only to lay before this House the views I was induced to form, as Viceroy of India, upon the important question of Candahar ; in order to obtain for them, before that question is discussed, with a view to a decision on the papers we are still awaiting from Her Majesty's Government, not a recorded opinion, but such fair consideration as your Lordships may reasonably be asked to vouchsafe them in recognition of the great national importance of the subject to which they refer. In the discussion which took place last Thursday on the Address it was observed by my noble friend the late Prime Minister, that the policy of the present Government appeared to be based on the principle of inverting and reversing, as far as they practically can, the action of their predecessors. Now, I think this observation was especially true and just as regards the Afghan policy of the two Governments. The Afghan

policy of the late Government was affirmed and supported by very large majorities in this and the other House of Parliament upon the most prolonged and vivacious discussion of every conceivable topic in any wise relevant to the incidents or objects of the Afghan War. That discussion was practically closed by the verdict of Parliament, and it is not my desire to reopen it. I shall accept the recorded result of it as the starting-point of the observations I wish to offer in deprecation of the abandonment of Candahar. But if the abandonment of Candahar be right, then the Afghan War was wrong —at least, this appears to be what Her Majesty's Ministers intended us to feel. For, in the Speech from the Throne, they have distinctly indicated their settled disposition either to reject as worthless, or to repudiate as unjustifiable, the most important practical result of that war, and to revert as closely as they can to the condition of things which preceded the war, which occasioned the war, and of which the war was intended to prevent the recurrence. This is obvious, because, if we are to retire from Candahar only with the intention of going back to Candahar as often as it may hereafter become necessary, either to control the action of the Cabul Power, or to punish its misbehaviour, or to exclude foreign influence from Afghanistan, or to correct the results of such influence, why then, of course, it would be more reasonable and more effectual for this purpose to remain at Candahar, which is already in our possession, on the principle that prevention is better than cure. Therefore, I presume that the control of the Cabul Power, and the exclusion of foreign influence from Afghanistan are not among the motives of this decision. My Lords, I do not know what the motives of it may have been; but I do know very well what the effect of it will be. In India the effect of it will be this—in every native bazaar, in every Indian Court, along every Indian frontier, it will display to Her Majesty's subjects, feudatories, and neighbours, in that part of the world, the unaccustomed and bewildering spectacle of the most violent and inexplicable oscillation in the policy of their rulers; and, if I know anything of Oriental character, such a spectacle will certainly not be conducive to their respect for the sobriety of your rule, or their confidence in the serenity of your wisdom and the value of your word. That is what will be the effect of it in India. And now, what will be the effect

of it in England ? It will be to cast upon the late Government —no, I will not say this, for I believe that to be impossible— but it will, at least, advertise to the whole country the deliberate desire and intention of the present Government to cast upon their predecessors in office the odium—the unmerited odium—of having involved India in a great and costly war, leading to no appreciable result of adequate benefit to the permanent security of the Empire on behalf of which that war was waged. Now, I must say I do not think the late Government has deserved of its successors that they should endeavour to place it in such a position as this. For my own part, I do not hesitate to say that if a full and complete equivalent be not now obtained for all the blood and treasure cost us by the war—or, rather, the two wars undertaken in Afghanistan—wars which could have been neither averted nor evaded by any Administration responsible for the security of India—the fault of this will not rest with the late Government of India ; it will not rest with Her Majesty's late Ministers ; but it will rest, and history will make it rest, with those who reject the results of that war and refuse even to retain the advantages secured by it. My Lords, I must also add that—considering that Parliament has, by large and repeated majorities, confirmed the principles and approved the objects of the Afghan War—the presumption is, to say the least, *primâ facie* against a measure which implies that those principles are wrong and those results worthless. This, I confess, is the point of view from which I now approach the question whether we ought to abandon Candahar or to retain it. I do not know, and the House does not know, what are the reasons which have induced the present Government to come to the decision that Candahar ought to be abandoned, and to advise Her Majesty to this effect ; but I do say that such a decision ought not to be carried out without a fair, an impartial, and, if necessary, a repeated reference to the reasons which induced the late Government to come to the precisely opposite conclusion that Candahar ought to be retained, and to advise Her Majesty to that effect. My Lords, these reasons were numerous, they were serious, and they were carefully considered. But, for the present, they may all be summed up in the conviction, to which the late Government was led by them, upon a full review of the whole condition of those affairs with which you

are now dealing in Afghanistan—that the permanent maintenance of the British Power at Cabul—I do not say necessarily by means of annexation, though neither do I shrink from saying by means of annexation should that become necessary; but, at any rate, in some form or other, direct or indirect, which, for all practical purposes, will be a substantial reality—is now the only effectual safeguard against a recurrence of the danger so conspicuously brought into light, and so forcibly pressed upon our attention, by our experience of the late Afghan War, and our knowledge of the circumstances which gave rise to it. Whatever may have been the merits or demerits of that war, it has conclusively established, beyond all possibility of reasonable or honest question, one fact of supreme importance. That fact is the facility with which Russia—if she has established her influence in Afghanistan, or if she can establish her influence there—will always be able, whenever she desires, to cripple the action or embarrass the policy of England in Europe by disturbing the security of England in India; and to do this, moreover, without even employing her own troops for the purpose, but simply by creating a diversion on the North-West Frontier of India through an alliance with the Cabul Power. This, I say, is the one great fact you have now to deal with, and which, whatever be your policy, you must always bear in mind. It is established on evidence of the most formidable character. It cannot be disputed, and it ought not to be shirked. My Lords, the Russian Mission to Cabul, which was the immediate occasion of the Afghan War, is a proceeding of which the morality has been justified on the ground that it was virtually a war measure legitimatised by the fact that our European relations with Russia were, at that time, strained to the very verge of imminent hostilities. But we are not concerned to discuss the morality of that proceeding. What does practically concern us is the danger of it. And, from this point of view, it matters nothing to us whether the Mission was the result of sudden impulse or long premeditation. If it was the result of sudden impulse, it clearly shows us how close is the peril to which we shall at all times be exposed from the establishment in Afghanistan of any foreign influence more powerful, or more energetically exerted than our own. If, on the other hand, it was the result of careful preparation,

it shows us, no less clearly, how great is the value attached by Russia to the acquisition of such an influence, and what is the purpose to which she will put it if she acquires it. In the one case you must look upon Afghanistan as a loaded pistol lying on your doorstep, ready to be exploded in the full front of your power whenever Russia, upon a sudden impulse, stretches out a hasty hand to seize it. In the other case you are fully warned of the mischief which such a weapon may inflict on you if you ever relax your own firm grasp upon the butt end of it. In both cases the danger is the same; and in either case the magnitude of such a danger can scarcely be exaggerated; and in connection with this consideration there is another which must always be taken into account. I do not suppose there exists in Europe a man whose mind is loaded with weightier or more constant cares, arising out of wider interests, than the Sovereign who personally administers the vast Empire of Russia. It is practically impossible for the Russian Government at St. Petersburg to be incessantly watching and controlling the detailed action of its local authorities in a region so remote as Central Asia. The Russian Governor-General at Tashkend thus occupies, in his great Satrapy as a representative of a distant and despotic Government, a position of great practical independence; and if he be an able, energetic, and ambitious man, anxious to extend the influence or the territory of his Sovereign, he will naturally do a great many things which he has not been instructed to do—at the risk of being disavowed if he fails, but in the hope of winning honour and reward if he succeeds. This consideration leads me to the point of what I have to say about the object and origin of that Russian Mission. It was not an unpremeditated Mission. It was not an impromptu act of retaliation or precaution. But it was the carefully prepared result of three years' preliminary correspondence, and three years' direct negotiation—in all, six years of patient preparation. I affirm this briefly, but positively. It would take me all night to prove in detail what I affirm; but the proofs of it are to be found by those who care to search for them, obscurely buried and inconveniently dispersed through numerous Blue Books, all of which are accessible to your Lordships. And, in one word, this is what they prove. From the year 1872 to the year 1875 the Governor-General of Russian

Turkestan was in constant communication with the Ameer of Cabul; and his communications were regarded—I must say most reasonably regarded—by the Ameer and his advisers as having no other conceivable object than that of establishing Russian influence in Afghanistan. The Ameer was at first seriously alarmed, and afterwards dangerously attracted, by the increasing significance of these communications; and, in the year 1873, he made to the British Government a strong appeal on the subject of them. With the result of that appeal he was, as your Lordships well know, dissatisfied. Great, however, as is the importance I attach to this incident, as the turning-point of our relations with Afghanistan, it is not my present intention to refer to it any further. For it was the subject of animated controversy in this House only two years ago; and I do not wish to revive that controversy, or to provoke on the part of any noble Lord in this House those feelings of personal acrimony which I am most anxious not to import into my own remarks. But the fact remains, and I state it as a matter of history, without wishing to use it as a matter of controversy, that, from the year 1875 to the year 1878, the Russian Governor-General was, for all practical purposes, permanently represented at Cabul, in the most effectual manner, by means of incessant relays of special envoys or agents; the one always arriving before the other departed. The Government of India, moreover, had the strongest possible reasons to believe, and, indeed, to know, that the object of these incessant special missions and secret communications was to negotiate and prepare that alliance which they enabled General Stoletieff afterwards to conclude so easily and rapidly at Cabul in the year 1878. My Lords, the terms of that alliance, which was an alliance defensive and offensive against India, are known to the Indian Government and to Her Majesty's Ministers. But as they have not yet been made known to the Parliament and the people of this country, and as I am not yet aware whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to lay them before the House, I will not now refer to them. All I wish to urge upon your Lordships' serious consideration is the broad fact which appears to me established by all the circumstances I have thus briefly indicated in regard to the position of the Cabul Power, between the now no longer distant bounds of the Russian and British

Empires in Asia. Thus situated, no Ameer of Cabul can practically stand alone and aloof from the influence of one or other of the two great European Empires with which Afghanistan is contiguous. He must inevitably fall under the control either of the British or of the Russian Power; and, if he does not fall under British control, it is obvious that he will fall under Russian control. To deny this appears to me as extravagant a proposition as it would be to assert that a stick, balanced on its end and left to itself, will not fall in one direction or another. And now let us suppose for a moment that Afghanistan falls under the control of Russia. Can any of your Lordships doubt for a moment that the establishment of Russian influence in Afghanistan would be practically incompatible with the untroubled maintenance of the British Power in India? My Lords, it does not lie in the mouth of any responsible statesman to maintain such an opinion. And, certainly, no such opinion was entertained by the late Lord Lawrence, whose authority on this subject was so frequently invoked in your discussions of two years ago. Ten years previous to the event of which I am now speaking the only danger beyond our North-West Frontier anticipated by Lord Lawrence, or by anyone else, was from the establishment of Russian influence in Afghanistan by forcible means. Lord Lawrence could not then discuss, for no one then foresaw, the danger which actually did arise ten years later from the public presence of the Russian Power at Cabul—not as the foe, but as the avowed friend and ally of the Ameer of Cabul, at a time when that Prince had ceased to be the avowed friend and ally of the British Government. Yet even then, in a valuable Minute dated 1868, Lord Lawrence recorded his opinion that it is so necessary to exclude Russian influence from Afghanistan —aye, and to exclude it at any cost—that Russia, he said, ought to be plainly told that any further advance upon her part beyond a given point towards India—and, my Lords, her Asiatic frontiers were then far less close to ours than they are now—would entail upon her war with England in all parts of the world. War in all parts of the world! Such was the importance attached by Lord Lawrence to the efficacious and permanent exclusion of Russian influence from Afghanistan; and I think the leading members of the present Cabinet are all equally committed to this principle. For the Cabinet

which held office from 1868 to 1874 exacted from Russia, in 1869, a formal engagement, since then repeatedly renewed, to regard and treat Afghanistan as a State entirely excluded from the sphere of Russia's legitimate influence. If, then, all responsible British statesmen and all practical Indian Administrators are agreed as to the importance of maintaining British, and excluding Russian, influence in Afghanistan, it surely follows that the only practical question we have to consider is how is this to be done? Now, there are two ways in which you may endeavour to effect this object. You may seek the attainment of it by the exercise of a recognised control over the foreign relations of the Cabul Ruler by means of competent British representatives or agents in his dominions. This was the plan first tried by the late Government of India, and which led to the Treaty of Gandamak. So long as that plan was possible, we were anxious not to weaken, but to strengthen, the Cabul Power; and in its despatch of July, 1879, the late Government of India, reviewing the terms and objects of that Treaty, recorded its opinion that, so long as the Treaty was loyally observed by the Ameer of Cabul, the annexation of Candahar would not only be unnecessary, but also undesirable. The case, however, was essentially altered by the atrocious massacre of our Mission to Cabul, which defeated the main object of the Treaty of Gandamak. And, my Lords, I do not deny for a moment that this is an event which I recall, and shall always recall, with the keenest affliction. I do not think that even his nearest relations can mourn with a deeper grief than mine the dastardly murder of my dear and truly gallant friend, Sir Louis Cavagnari. I will not obtrude upon this House my great private sorrow for that irreparable loss. Apart, however, from that great sorrow, my opinion as to the propriety of the course we pursued by acquiescing in the Ameer's strongly expressed, and apparently sincere, request for the support of a British Mission at his Court is an opinion entirely unchanged by the abominable crime with which it was so ill requited. But, although I think it was right, and even necessary, in the interests of all concerned, to make that humane experiment, undeterred by the risks it involved, and of which we were not unconscious, I admit, my Lords, that the experiment has failed. That being the case, the failure of it leaves open only one course practically conducive to the

attainment of those objects which all responsible statesmen have hitherto approved, desired, and insisted on; and this is the course adopted by the late Government in reference to Candahar. For if you cannot have moral guarantees for the adequate control of the Cabul Power, then you must have material guarantees. The failure of the Gandamak Treaty has proved the impossibility of moral guarantees; and what will be your material guarantees if you abandon Candahar and the Kurram headlands? As long as you retain possession of these, the position we have to assert, and the interest we have to safeguard, upon our Afghan Frontier, will be practically independent of the good or ill will of any Cabul Ruler. My Lords, the possession of Candahar and the surrounding country, when brought into railway connection with the Valley of the Indus, will give us in Afghanistan the only kind of influence which it is now possible for us to exercise over the people of that country. It will enable us to compel them, when necessary, to keep the peace; and it will render comparatively unimportant to us the conditions of their relations with Russia. The possession of Candahar would lay open the whole of Afghanistan to our armies in case of need. It would most effectually secure the Empire's only vulnerable frontier against both attack and intrigue; and it would open the means of bringing by rail all the trade of Central Asia to Kurrachee on the one hand and Calcutta on the other. I beseech Her Majesty's Ministers—most earnestly I beseech them—not to neglect the warning given them by General Roberts, or the example set them by Russia, in reference to the importance of cultivating their trade routes between India and Central Asia. It is not to war, but to commerce, that you must look for the extension of your legitimate influence in Asia. And, my Lords, pray remember that the loss of legitimate influence really means the loss of peace, the loss of security, the loss of freedom, the loss of all that renders possible the existence of the Indian Empire. And then there is another point which must not be lost sight of. The question of Candahar does not stand alone. Beyond Candahar there is Herat, beyond Herat there is Merv. My Lords, Herat is a position which England has twice fought to preserve from foreign domination. It has been called the Key of India; and Liberal statesmen have at all times attached great importance

to it. My own opinion is that the importance of Herat is entirely relative; and that if the British Power were firmly established at Candahar, you could afford to regard with indifference what happens at Herat. For you would then be in a position both to prevent any arrangements about Herat of which you did not approve, and also to enforce the observance of arrangements of which you did approve. But do not flatter yourselves that this is now your position. You are at present utterly powerless to exercise the smallest influence over the destinies of Herat, and so you will continue to be till you are firmly established at Candahar. And now let us see what are the objections to this policy. The most practical of them all lies in the assumption that the annexation of Candahar will be expensive. My Lords, this is a very debatable proposition. I do not think it can be denied or affirmed with any degree of certainty; for the rude phænomena of Afghan rule furnish no data from which to estimate correctly the probable financial results of British administration. I do not think that any Indian administrator could have possibly predicted before the annexation of the Punjaub, whether that great addition to Empire would most increase the expenses or the revenues of the Indian Government. Much must necessarily depend upon the manner in which the province is administered; much also on the selection of the man to whom the administration of it is first entrusted. The opinion I was led to form, as Viceroy of India, upon the best information which could then be obtained, is that Candahar, if judiciously administered, will, when connected by rail with the Valley of the Indus, at once pay its expenses; and that, in a short while, it will pay them twice over. I should think less highly than I do of the administrative capacity of our Indian Services if it turned out otherwise; but I admit that this is only a personal anticipation—a guess, if you will. Let us assume it to be over-sanguine—what then? My Lords, national security, and that permanent immunity from external danger which is the essential condition of national security, are blessings not to be enjoyed without paying the full price for them. The possession of Empire must always be an expensive privilege. But the loss of Empire may be a ruinous disgrace; and the safety of India is worth more than a few pieces of silver. We cannot haggle with destiny. I feel not

a shadow of a doubt that any resettlement of the North-West Frontier of India, which leaves that frontier exposed to a recurrence of the dangers that gave rise to the Afghan War will inflict, and at no distant date, upon the Government of India far heavier financial burdens than any which can be incurred on account of the administration of Candahar. The importance of this general consideration cannot, I think, be more forcibly pointed out than it was, some years ago, by the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Lord Granville). In 1869 he explained that what Her Majesty's Government had then to guard against, even at the cost of war for the purpose, was not then, any more than it is now, the bugbear of an imminent armed invasion of India by Russia, but the constantly disturbing and unsettling effect, all along our frontier, of the subtle extension of Russian influence and intrigue even from a point so comparatively distant as Herat. The noble Earl then said, and said most truly, that by this means Russia, without moving a soldier, could paralyse the finances of India. And I must ask your Lordships to observe how infinitely greater would be the danger, then pointed out by the noble Earl, if Russian influence and intrigue were extended, not merely from Herat, but from Cabul on the one side and Candahar on the other, whilst British influence had no extension beyond Peshawur. Putting aside, therefore, this debatable question of expense, on which we have no adequate data for practical argument, I come to what may be called the moral objections. We are told that annexation is very immoral; and that we have no right to annex Candahar unless the Candaharis specially request us to be so good as to do so, or unless, on the other hand, they commit some abominable crime, for which their conquest is the only fitting punishment. This objection was mentioned by the noble Marquess who is now Secretary of State for India (the Marquess of Hartington) in reply to a deputation urging him not to relinquish Candahar. But the noble Marquess is a statesman whose mind is not swayed by impulsive sentiment; and I earnestly hope that the noble Marquess will not allow his calm and manly judgment to be confused by a mere word. What is conquest? It has many different meanings. It may mean such an operation as the conquests of Attila—massacre, confiscation, the sack of cities,

the sale of their inhabitants into slavery ; and this is probably the greatest of all evils. It may mean such an operation as the conquests of some Mohammedan princes ; the imposition of a grinding tribute, the degradation of a national religion, the violation of national traditions, and the outrage of national sentiment. This also is a great calamity for the conquered. 'But when it means only that good government is to be substituted for anarchy, that security of life and property is to supersede robbery and murder, and that a few English officials, with a limited number of English troops, who all pay for everything they get, are to replace lawless Sirdars, who, owning a doubtful allegiance to a distant and alien despot, are in the habit of taking whatever they want without paying for it at all—then, my Lords, I really cannot see that conquest is a terrible thing, although you may please to give it a terrible name. The British Power, if extended in Candahar, would interfere with no man's religion. It would bring much money into the country, and, so far from augmenting, it would greatly diminish the burden of taxation by increasing the wealth of the population. Under British rule the Candaharis would quickly learn, as others have learnt before them, that law and order mean wealth ; and there are no people in the world so greedy of wealth as the Afghans. As to national sentiments and traditions, British rule would not disturb them, for the simple reason that they do not exist. To suppose that the Candaharis have any sorty of loyalty to Cabul, or any liking for the rule of a Cabul Ameer, is to evince complete ignorance of their history and way of life. If ever there was a merely geographical entity, it is Afghanistan. It is as idle to talk of the national sentiments of the Afghans as it would be to talk of the corporate feeling of the parish of Marylebone, or to suppose that because Westminster and Athens are both of them cities, therefore the City of Westminster is regarded by its inhabitants with feelings like those with which Athens inspired the Athenians. My Lords, if any man was competent to judge of the normal natural condition of Afghanistan, that man was surely Lord Lawrence. Well, this is what Lord Lawrence wrote of it in 1868—

It appears to me that it will always be found exceedingly difficult, for any extended period, to maintain a united and strong government in Afghanistan. The genius of the chiefs and people, as evinced in

the independent Pathan communities of the Border, is evidence to this effect. A chief may now and then arise who may for a time unite the different provinces under one rule; but when he has passed away, the tendency again will be to separation. With the single exception of the pressure of a common enemy, and even this circumstance will not avail, there appear to be no ties to bind the Afghans together.

My Lords, I do not believe that the people of Candahar would regard themselves as humiliated in the smallest degree by annexation to British India. I am confident that such annexation would be of immense and permanent benefit to them; and I am disposed to doubt rather whether they deserve such a favour than whether they have merited such a punishment. Of any policy, however, which involves annexation, it may justly be asked, What is to be the practical limit of it? How far will you go with such a policy? How far can you go? "Are we," it may be said, "to go on conquering and annexing one barbarous wilderness after another, till we reach, at last, the Dardanelles in one direction, and the boundaries of Russian Turkestan in another?" If not, where will you stop? Where will you draw the line? My Lords, I think it is very right to ask and very necessary to answer these questions. I do not underrate, and to a great extent I share, the sentiment with which, by so many of our countrymen, war and conquest are regarded in the light of public crimes. I will yield to no man in the condemnation of wars undertaken for no better object than the gratification of personal ambition, the indulgence of national vanity, or the provision of active service for an army. But I must observe that no one can denounce war and conquest in the absolute unmeasured terms so frequently employed for that purpose without denouncing, at the same time, one of the most potent agents of civilisation. The greater part of Europe consists of fragments of the Roman Empire, an Empire created by wars which rendered possible the diffusion of Christianity and the development of law. The whole of America, north and south, has been conquered from its original owners, who were savages, chiefly by Englishmen and Spaniards. The enormous Russian Empire has been formed by a series of obscure wars waged against barbarians impenetrable to any other civilising process; and the whole fabric of the British Empire in India is an additional illustration of the same thing. Upon those, therefore, who have condemned my Asiatic policy solely on

the ground that, in one form or another, it involves conquest, I am entitled, I think, to retort their own questions. Where, I ask, do they draw the line? Can they justify our present possession of the Peshawur Valley? Have we any right to Lahore? What is our title to Delhi, to Allahabad, to Benares, to Calcutta? My Lords, I believe that the most consistent and candid of my critics would answer all these questions plainly and directly enough. They would say, and, indeed, some of them have said, that we have no business in India at all. It was by crime that we acquired our power in India. The only justification for its maintenance is that its downfall would be injurious to the natives; and the only attitude that befits us in that country is one of penitence for the sins of our forefathers, with an anxious desire to expiate, if possible, their fault. But, surely the first remark suggested by this view of the case is, that those who hold it are, for that very reason, disqualified to form a trustworthy opinion on the policy best calculated to maintain and uphold the Empire of British India. No one should try to administer an institution of which he entirely disapproves. The man who does not value life and health ought not to practise as a physician; and a man who condemns the Indian Empire in principle is disqualified to judge of the measures necessary for its defence and security. I shall not attempt to refute these views; but I cannot pass them by without a few words of energetic contradiction. Whatever may be said by those who maintain them, I cannot believe, and I do not think the English nation will believe, that an Empire can have been founded on robbery and fraud, when we are also told in the same breath by those who make this assertion that the Empire, thus founded, must, nevertheless, be maintained, because its fall would involve 200,000,000 people in anarchy and bloodshed, and relegate them to the barbarism from which they are slowly emerging. Grapes do not grow on thorns, nor figs on thistles; and it is surely not under the protection of thieves and robbers that men sit beneath their own vines and fig-trees in undisturbed enjoyment of the peaceful fruits of honest labour.

My Lords, if I seem to have been asserting truisms I am sorry for it; but it seems to me that the alleged moral obligation to retire from Candahar cannot be stated in any terms which do not imply the proposition that we ought to retire

from India altogether. And, therefore, to the question, "How far would you go, and where would you draw the line?" I reply, without hesitation, that, for the present, I would go as far as Candahar; and there I would draw the line. Because I am convinced that, if the line be promptly drawn there, and, when drawn, firmly maintained, then you may look upon the permanent security of the North-West Frontier of India as a question practically closed—I will not say for ever, because no such question can be closed for ever; but closed, at least, for a period of time so long that the present generation need no longer be practically concerned about it. And now, my Lords, I am at the end of what I had to say about this great question. The sum and substance of it all is this. No Afghan Government ever has been, or ever can be, or ever will be stable, unless it submits to the direct influence either of England or of Russia. Shere Ali recognised this essential condition of his own power; and when, unfortunately, the British Government, in 1873, failed to respond to his recognition of it in our own favour, he, naturally, turned to Russia, and leant on her for advice and support. Russia then, no less naturally, utilised to her own interests the opportunities thus placed under her hand. And, when her European relations with us became strained, she invited the Ameer to a course of conduct which ultimately placed him in a position towards us not to be tolerated by the British Power without discredit to its own character, and danger to its own interests in India. Hence the Afghan War. That war has now placed it in your power to prevent, for a generation at least, any recurrence of the dangers that gave rise to it. But, if you reject the successful results of that war, if you restore Candahar and the Kurram headlands to the Cabul Power, or otherwise abandon the positions you now hold there—in short, if you look upon the Afghan War as a mere blunder, which has bequeathed to you no permanent benefits, nor any other duty than that of precipitate retreat and penitential reversion to the previous state of things, then, my Lords, I predict—and I predict it with a feeling akin to despair—that, before long, you will be obliged to go back to Candahar under conditions of greatly aggravated difficulty and danger; or else, that you will have to make your final choice between holding India as tenants-at-will to Russia, and fortifying her frontier behind the mountains

at a vast expense, upon a scale fitted for its protection, not merely against mountain tribes, but against the organised military power of a great European rival, supported by their co-operation, and encouraged by the shaken confidence of your own subjects in your ability and determination to resist its advances. Having said this, I have now no more to say. The subject is a great one. It demands a great decision. But I leave it with confidence in the hands of your Lordships, feeling, as I do, that in all its bearings and in all its aspects, it most vitally concerns the safety, honour, and welfare of our Sovereign and her dominions.

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LORD SALISBURY

LORD SALISBURY was well known as a debater in the House of Commons before he became a Peer. His incisive and sarcastic style was not at first altogether agreeable to the House. It has been observed that successful speakers have, almost without exception, learned their business at the expense of their audience. Lord Salisbury, when he was Lord Robert Cecil, cultivated an acerbity which he did not feel, and acquired a habit of monotonous, unrelieved irony which, though it was often amusing, lost its effect by repetition. It was not until he first took office as Secretary of State for India, being then known as Lord Cranborne, that he enlarged his scope, and gave full play to the versatility of his intellect. From that time he became a real power in political controversy, trenchant and forcible, logical and clear. He was very soon removed to the House of Lords, where he found himself in a more congenial atmosphere. But it was not enough for him, and he gradually developed on the platform a capacity for broad, general criticism and exposition which he had never before enjoyed a full opportunity of displaying. Not many orators have been better able to think on their legs. His indiscretions were numerous. At the same time he contrived to escape their consequences by the dexterity with which he disposed of intricate and complicated problems. His treatment of subjects was so lucid that he seemed sometimes to be only stating facts when he was really drawing conclusions, and his arguments were so skilfully constructed that they appeared to proceed inevitably from premisses which had not been assumed. Lord Salisbury never talked at large when he addressed a public meeting. He led up to his goal by a series of orderly steps, though he took care to relieve the journey by occasional digressions. Few speakers have better understood the art of drawing an inference by

means of an illustration. This speech at Newport was delivered in critical and peculiar circumstances. Lord Salisbury became Prime Minister for the first time after the defeat of Mr. Gladstone's Government in June, 1885. The passing of the County Franchise Act and of the Redistribution Act had made a General Election in the autumn necessary. The speech was therefore regarded as in the nature of a political manifesto. For that purpose it is singularly adroit. Lord Salisbury explains his reasons for allowing the Irish Coercion Act to lapse with extraordinary skill, and his reference to Home Rule, while committing him to nothing, contained no language which could be considered by Irish Nationalists as irritating or offensive.

Speech at Newport in Monmouthshire

October 8, 1885

The Marquis of Salisbury : Ladies and Gentlemen,—I thank you very heartily for this reception, given by so imposing and magnificent a meeting, which, in one sense, I am most rejoiced to see as indicating the strength of the Conservative feeling in this part of the country. But in another sense it fills me with apprehension lest I should not be able to convey to all who sit here the observations which I desire to submit to them. It has already been brought to your notice that our advent to office was unexpected, was the result of an action on the part of our opponents which we had no cause to anticipate, and that we took office under many and great disadvantages. No one, who is at all conversant with party tactics, would doubt for a moment that it was a great misfortune to us that we were obliged to fight upon a financial proposal which we thought radically unsound, and that the result of the battle was that our opponents retired from office; and now that our official career has lasted a short time I pray you to notice the kind of criticism with which it is received by our opponents. They do not say that we have gone wrong. What they say, and it seems to them the bitterest reproach they can address to us, is that we have done like themselves. Do not understand me to admit the fact. I only say that that is

what they assert. They do not reproach us with it on the ground of policy, though, of course, they maintain their own policy; but they maintain that we are guilty of some great immorality in acting contrary to the professions that we have made. Some orators described our conduct as slavish, others called it submissive. Lord Hartington says we have been guilty of gross political immorality—he, that great maintainer of principle, who never yielded to opinion in his life. Mr. Chamberlain reproaches us in language so categorical that I will quote it. Mr. Chamberlain says—

> What is the complaint that I have to make against the present Government? It is that they are acting and speaking in office in absolute contradiction to all that they said and did in Opposition.

And he then proceeds to single me out specially. As he has singled me out, I will speak for myself. I will say that this is a baseless libel—that it has not a shred or shadow of truth, and that I defy him to point out the language I used in Opposition or in office which I am contradicting by my deeds. That is a simple test. If he can prove it, he confutes me; if he cannot prove it, the reproach which he makes recoils upon himself and covers with the charge of dishonesty the tactics he pursues. (A Voice: "Like his affidavits.") Unfortunately, he is not strong in the affidavits; at least, he is not strong in the affidavits that are of any value. The affidavits he has to use his friends are obliged to purchase. Let me take foreign politics for my illustration. You will allow me to say, in touching upon foreign politics, that though I can speak to you in perfect freedom of home politics, you will understand, in the particular office I have the honour to fill, it is not in my power to speak with absolute freedom when I am touching upon foreign affairs. One of these foreign slavish and submissive things we have done is that we concluded a loan for Egypt which the late Government had undertaken to conclude, but which they were unable to issue. They obtained a convention on which a loan was grounded; they maintained that the loan was absolutely necessary in pursuance of their Egyptian policy; but somehow, when it came to the test, they were not able to raise the loan, and we found the matter in a state of absolute deadlock. Then, again, they were pursuing certain negotiations with respect to Afghanistan. These negotiations were going on. We continued them to a successful

conclusion. What do they mean when they say that this is slavish and submissive conduct? Do they mean that it is the duty of statesmen who succeed to office to be false to the engagements which their predecessors have made, and to disappoint the expectations which their predecessors have raised? If this is their view of public duty, I do not dispute that probably they would do so if they had the chance. But that has never been our view of public duty. You will search in vain through the speeches of members of the Opposition for any indications that the thought of such disloyalty to those with whom England was dealing ever entered into our conception as part of the duty of British statesmen. Then I see that I am bitterly reproached because a rising has taken place in Eastern Roumelia which is contrary to one of the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin. One of my opponents, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, said, in a tone of loud triumph, "Whatever happens, you may see that the present Government will not venture to use a single English soldier in order to repress this rising." When, I should like to know, was it the practice of English statesmen of either party to use the military force of this country to settle disputes that have arisen in the internal affairs of other nations? It is one of the first principles of English policy that if subjects rise against their rulers, or rulers are severe towards their subjects, we may express our opinion, but we do not interfere by acts. But in this case I deny that the policy of the Berlin Treaty has been frustrated. In the first place, what has taken place has not restored what was called the "Big Bulgaria" of the San Stefano Treaty. That was a very different affair, and it was the destruction of the "Big Bulgaria" of the San Stefano Treaty that was part of the principal business of the ambassadors who assembled at Berlin. But that is not the only point. Our object in dealing with those new nationalities of the Balkan was that they should be true and real nationalities. It was the policy of Europe—it was the inevitable result of the progress of events, that when there was a homogeneous Christian population subject to the rule of the Porte, the homogeneous Christian population would, by its own progressive tendencies, by its own innate character, necessarily before long free itself from that subjection, and it was an operation of that kind which the Berlin Treaty sanctioned. But it was essential that the nations which grew up

should represent the real character, and grow by the natural laws of the community to which they belong. I must speak with all courtesy, and I am anxious that not a word that can give offence should escape my lips, but remember that when the Berlin Treaty was signed these provinces were occupied by a conquering army. Also remember that if Eastern Roumelia had then been handed over to Bulgaria to form part of a united state, its future political growth would not have been that which the character and history of the inhabitants would necessarily and naturally cause. It would have been that which would arise from the position of a conquering army which was still bivouacked in its midst. That conquering army has retired; seven years have passed away; a separate, distinct, and genuine national character has been formed; and although I do not deny that I think it would have been more fortunate for Europe and for the Eastern Roumelians themselves that this event should not have happened, still I utterly deny that the provisions of the Berlin Treaty have been destitute of the highest beneficent effects. I say that if these two Bulgarias are, in the future, to develop the strength, character, and idiosyncrasy of a nation, it will be due to the care which Europe exercises over their cradle, and I may also say that it is not absolutely without precedent in the history of treaties that after a few years some modification should take place in their provisions. I remember the Treaty of Paris, which provided for the separation of the two Roumanias; but I think before the Treaty of Paris had been signed two years, they were united. Again, the Treaty of Vienna provided for the union of the Netherlands and Belgium; but before fifteen years had elapsed they were separated. Treaties do not affect to overrule the general impulses of populations. What they do affect is to protect those impulses against control by force, by armies which may be able to give a dangerous turn to the natural development of the people over whom, for the moment, they chance to rule. Our policy, I need not tell you, is to uphold the Turkish Empire whenever it can be genuinely and healthily upheld; but whenever its rule is proved by events to be inconsistent with the welfare of populations, then to strive to cherish and foster strong self-sustaining nationalities who shall make a genuine and important contribution to the future freedom and independence of Europe. For the moment,

I hope that the Great Powers are agreed that trouble and disturbance ought to go no further, and that their influence will be sufficient to confine within the narrowest possible sphere the modification in the existing state of things which the impulse of the population has produced. Our object, above all things, is peace; because, if peace is broken, you can never be certain when armies are once in the field, what the results of their efforts will lead to, and whether the results will be favourable to national growth or industrial independence, and you never can be certain that the fate of small nations may not be sacrificed by the exigencies which military events may enable larger nations to require.

Turning from foreign politics, I again must call your attention, before saying anything of the problems that lie before us, to the peculiar mode in which our opinions are dealt with by our opponents. Their plan is this—first, to sketch out to you in brilliant and imaginative colours, what they think the Conservative policy is. They prove to you what ought to be the Conservative policy, and then it naturally turns out that they know nothing about the matter, and if the Conservatives take a very different view, they declare that they are the basest of mankind and abandon their own ideas for the sake of the sweets of office. Conservatives alone should be the exponents of Conservative opinion. I do not know anything so comical as a Radical trying to point out what a Conservative should be. Now, one of the subjects which, by common consent, must occupy the attention of the future Parliament is one which our adversaries would persuade you that they only have the right to touch—I mean the subject of local government. Even Mr. Gladstone, in the long and dreary epistle which he, like an Emperor of old, wrote from his retirement, even Mr. Gladstone is disposed to deny us the right of entertaining the question of local self-government. He is gracious enough to admit that I have expressed very strong opinions in its favour, but he proceeds to point out that I have not the slightest influence over the opinions of my party, and that my influence must not be taken as any proof of what they really would think. I was very much struck by his warning, and I thought it better to provide myself with undoubted credentials. Therefore, I did not venture to address you till I met my colleagues in the Cabinet. I do not know whether he thinks the Cabinet has any influence over the

opinions of the Conservative party; but if the sixteen gentlemen who sit in the Cabinet are to be expected to represent the opinions of the Conservative party, I will say that, without doubt and hesitation, and without a dissentient voice, they are strongly of opinion that large reforms in our local government are necessary, and in the direction of increasing powers to local government are absolutely necessary. Bear in mind what true reform in local government means. I quite admit that the local authority should be popularly elected. But it does not merely mean that. You have not got at what you want when you have provided for the proper constitution of your local authority. You must provide it with sufficient power, and add to this power by diminishing the excessive and exaggerated powers which have been heaped upon the central authorities in London. That I claim to be a special Tory doctrine, which we have held through good report and evil report for many and many a generation. It has always been our contention that people in their own localities should govern themselves, and that the attempt to imitate the continental plan by throwing every authority back upon the central power, though it might produce a more scientific and exact and more effective administration for the moment, will, when tested, be disastrous to all good government. It would not provide a government that was suited to the feelings and idiosyncrasies of a number of communities, and it would not teach the people to take that active interest in their own government which is the only training that makes a man a true and worthy citizen. These are doctrines that we have held for a very long time. We urged them—that is to say, our fathers urged them, perhaps with undue persistency, and they opposed on that account the introduction of the new Poor Law. I am not blaming the new Poor Law. It was a necessary reform, in order to meet tremendous evils, but it did carry with it that spirit of centralisation which has sunk deeply into our organisation. It was opposed at the time by the Conservatives earnestly and strongly, and though I should be sorry to undo the beneficent action which may fairly be attributed to the new Poor Law, still I feel that the education of the country is so far advanced, the number of men taking part in local government is so great, that the time has come when many of those powers now given to the Local Government Board, and others in London, ought

to be given to the local authorities. There is one reform which I have very much at heart, and which I have urged so often that I do not think Mr. Chamberlain will say that I am trenching upon his copyright in claiming it. It is that all men, in proportion to their ability, should contribute to the expenses of local government. As you know, it is now defrayed by what are called rates, and they are not levied upon all men according to the amount of land or houses they may possess; they may possess very large resources and yet escape altogether contributing to the administration of the local government. That is a disadvantage to their fellows. It is not merely an injustice to them. It does a great deal of harm. I have been sitting for two years upon a Commission in respect to the housing of the poor, which was appointed in answer to a motion which I moved in the House of Lords. I have a strong feeling that the unfair incidence of rates in many parts of the country is a question of material gravity. I saw it stated lately in a Liberal organ that in some counties—Essex, I think—the rates had reached as much as 10s. in the pound. That is not a very common experience happily. We have heard of 5s. and 4s. not infrequently. What is the result of this? A man has a certain amount of money to invest. He says, "If I put this into Consols, I shall not pay any taxes at all; if I build cottages for the poor I shall have to pay half, or a quarter, or a fifth of my profits into the local exchequer." He naturally says, "I would rather find some other investment, one more profitable than this most unremunerative one of building houses for the poor." Thus there is put a difficulty in the way of a most urgent reform. You place, as it were, a special penalty on the man who provides houses in which the poor may live, and, therefore, I hold it to be an indispensable part of any reform of your local government that it should include the sanction of this great principle—that all men shall pay according to their ability. Well, then, there is another question in which I think local government may do something for us besides those sanitary questions and those matters connected with the relief of the poor which are so familiar to you. There is another matter of which you know something in this or in the neighbouring locality, and that is the burning question of Sunday closing. Sunday closing, looked at from a purely impartial point of view, and I am bound to say that

those people who do not go to public-houses are very impartial in the matter—(laughter)—presents these difficulties—that though in Scotland you have unanimity, in Ireland practical unanimity, and in Wales you have unanimity qualified by a certain amount of recent experience—(laughter)—and I am bound to admit that in Cornwall you have what appears to be unanimity—yet when you come to the strictly Teutonic portion of the community, you have anything but unanimity. I remember the present Lord Ebury, when Lord Robert Grosvenor, introducing a Bill for enforcing strict Sunday closing, which applied to eating as well as drinking in London; he got it as far as Committee, but the moment the population of London heard of it they took effective measures; they marched into Hyde Park and broke the windows of every member of Parliament they could find; and though there was not a logical connection between the remonstrance and the evil, the remonstrance had its effect, and the Bill was immediately withdrawn. I do not know that the population of London has since changed very much, and my impression is that if you tried Sunday closing upon them you would be very tired of it before you got very far. Looking upon it from an impartial point of view, it is impossible not to see that the difficulties of a uniform system for the whole country are extreme, and if we were not afraid of running against some antiquated doctrines on the subject, we should adopt the simple principle of letting each locality decide for itself what it should do in the matter. I venture to say that, as regards most of those who hear me, two words have rushed to their minds. They have said "He is professing local option." The value of local option differs exactly according to the value of the thing about which the local option is to take place. I do not think local option is a bad thing where that matter upon which local option takes place is legitimate; but where local option is also used for a different process, I have no kind of sympathy with it. It is proposed that localities shall have the power where the number of non-thirsty souls exceeds the number of thirsty souls, that the non-thirsty souls shall have the power of saying that the thirsty souls shall have nothing at all to drink. That seems to be trenching on the elementary liberties of mankind. If I like to drink beer it is no reason that I should be prevented from taking it because my neighbour

does not like it. If you sacrifice liberty in the matter of alcohol you will eventually sacrifice it in more important matters also, and those advantages of civil and religious liberty for which we have fought hard, will gradually be whittled away. I should, therefore, be inclined to trust the local authority with the settlement of the difficult question of Sunday closing; but always on one condition, that they should not be intrusted with the permanent settlement of it. That is to say that if, after two or three years' interval, they did not like what they had done, they should be at liberty to retrace their steps. I do not understand any permanent views in this matter. Perhaps those who do not now like Sunday closing would alter their minds after some experience, but I think the local authority should have power to alter any resolution to which they had come, and, for myself, I should be prepared to go a step further, and give the local authority power over licences to the extent which the magistrates now exercise. I see no reason why they should exercise it less wisely and liberally than the magistrates and I cannot blind myself to the fact that in some districts certain opinions have gained ground upon the bench which really disqualify magistrates from exercising a perfectly satisfactory judgment. But while I thus differ from the opinion of some I much respect, it is necessary to make this observation. One reason why the local authority would be a good authority is, that if any encroachment on the legitimate interest and industry of the publican is made, undoubtedly fair compensation must be given, and the local authority would have to provide that fair compensation, and I believe that the terror of having to provide that compensation, would furnish a not inconsiderable motive to induce the local authority to observe a wise moderation in the exercise of their functions. You will probably ask me—"How far do you feel inclined to make this extension of local authority general? How far, for instance, are you inclined to extend it to Ireland?" This is a difficult question, I admit. Our first principle, on which we have always gone, is to extend to Ireland, so far as we can, all the institutions in this country. But I fully recognise that in the case of local institutions especially, there is one element of consideration which in the state of Ireland, you cannot leave out of mind. Local authorities are more exposed to the temptation of enabling the majority to be unjust to the

minority when they obtain jurisdiction over a small area, than is the case when the authority derives its sanction and extends its jurisdiction over a wider area. It would be impossible to leave out of sight, in the extension of any such local authority to Ireland, the fact that the population is on several subjects deeply divided, and that it is the duty of every Government on all matters of essential justice to protect the minority against the majority.

With respect to the larger organic questions connected with Ireland, I cannot say much, though I can speak emphatically. I have nothing to say, but that the traditions of the party to which we belong are on this subject clear and distinct, and you may rely upon it that our party will not depart from them. We look upon the integrity of the Empire as a matter more important than almost any other political consideration that you can imagine, and we could not regard with favour any proposal which directly or indirectly menaced that which is the first condition of England's position among the nations of the world. If I had spoken three days ago, I should not have said anything more upon Irish matters; but I observed in yesterday's paper a remarkable speech from the Irish leader, in which he referred in so marked a way to the position of Austria-Hungary that I gathered that his words were intended to cover some kind of a new proposal, and that some notion of Imperial federation was floating in his mind. In speaking of Imperial federation, as entirely apart from the Irish question, I wish to guard myself very carefully. I deem it to be one of the questions of the future. I believe the drawing nearer of the colonies to this country is the policy to which all English patriots must look who desire to give effect in the councils of the world to the real strength of the English nation. We desire to draw all the advantages that can be drawn from that marvellous cluster of dependencies which our Empire, above every other Empire of ancient or modern time possesses. Our colonies are bound to us by deep affection, and we should be guilty not only of coolness of heart, but of gross and palpable folly, if we allowed that sentiment to cool, and did not draw such advantages for the common weal of the English as circumstances permitted us to do. I know that the idea of Imperial federation is still shapeless and unformed, and it is impossible for any man to do more than keep his mind open, with the

desire to give effect to aspirations which bear the mark of the truest patriotism upon them. Therefore, I wish to avoid any language which may seem to discourage a plan in which the fondest hope of high Imperial greatness for England in the future may be realised. But with respect to Ireland, I am bound to say that I have never seen any plan or any suggestion which gives me at present the slightest ground for anticipating that it is in that direction that we shall find any substantial solution of the difficulties of the problem. To maintain the unity of the Empire must, undoubtedly, be our first policy with regard to Ireland. But perhaps you will say that there is a more pressing matter—that the elementary conditions of social order are not maintained; and I have seen plenty of suggestions that the Government are to blame for this because they did not allow the Crimes Act to be renewed. Are you quite certain, in the first place, that the Crimes Act would prevent what has taken place, and that, in the second place, it was in our power to renew it? Both questions require to be answered in the affirmative before you can blame the Government. With respect to our power, I will remind you of this—you had passed an Act of Parliament, giving, in unexampled abundance and with unexampled freedom, supreme power to the great mass of the Irish people. You had done that; you were at the close of the Parliament elected on the system which was condemned; you were on the verge of the election of a new Parliament. To my mind—and that opinion was formed long before the change of Government occurred—to my mind the renewal of exceptional legislation against a population whom you had treated legislatively with this marked confidence was so gross an inconsistency that you could not possibly hope, during the few remaining months at your disposal before the present Parliament had expired, even if you had wished it, to renew any legislation which expressed on the one side a distrust of what, on the other side, your former legislation had so strongly emphasised. The only result would have been that you would not have passed the Act, but would have produced by the inconsistency of your position so intense an exasperation among the Irish people that you would have caused ten times more evil, ten times more resistance to the law, than your Crimes Act could possibly have availed to check. The effect of the Crimes Act has been very much exaggerated.

While it was in existence there grew up a thousand branches of the National League, and it is from them that those difficulties proceeded with which you have now to contend. The provisions in the Crimes Act against boycotting were of very small effect. It grew up under that Act, because it is a crime which legislation has a very great difficulty in reaching. I have seen it stated that the Crimes Act diminished outrages, that boycotting acted through outrages, and that the Crimes Act diminished boycotting. It is not true; the Act did not diminish outrages. I have had a return of all the outrages in September during which the Act was not in existence, and outrages were considerably fewer than in August when the Act was still in existence. Boycotting was the act of persons proposing to do things which in themselves are legal, and which are only illegal because of the intention with which they are done. I will give you an instance of boycotting, and I will leave you to tell me whether the Crimes Act will affect it. Not long ago a boycotted man walked into a Roman Catholic church, and everyone left the church instead of sitting still until the service was finished. The priest said: "I will go on with the service and finish it for you alone, but I would recommend you to go away." What is the use of an Act of Parliament against a system of that kind? You cannot indict people because they go to church or leave church. It is more like the excommunication or interdict of the Middle Ages than anything we know now. As far as boycotting is liable to the law, as far as legal remedies can reach it, do not imagine that the Irish Government are passive or quiet in putting the remedies of the ordinary law into action. At the present moment there are thirty-five prosecutions for boycotting, and that alone will show you that the Irish Government are doing their best with what they consider a difficult evil. The truth about boycotting is that it depends upon the passing humour of the population. I do not believe that in any community it has endured. I doubt whether in any community law has been able to provide a satisfactory remedy, but I believe it contains its own Nemesis. It presents so much irresponsible power, and is used with so much freedom to gratify private grudges and obtain private ends, that at last it falls by its own weight. It is now discouraged by the very persons to whom it owed its birth. I believe that the National

League now finds that the Frankenstein which they have raised threatens their own interests as much as those of others. But be that as it may, I believe that Parliament possessing a full mandate and the Government in power are bound, above everything else, to exhaust every possible remedy in order that men may pursue freely their lawful industry in any station in life.

Now, there is a very important question of which you have heard a great deal, and that is land. About the land there seems to be an idea with some persons that it should be split up into a number of proprietorships from ten to fifteen acres. I will at once say that I regret exceedingly the disappearance of the yeomanry in this country—and I do not say it with any pressure of present political motives. I have said so on many occasions during the past twenty years. It is a great misfortune to this country, and the country does not fully recognise this misfortune. People imagine that where an evil exists the Queen, the Lords, and the Commons should stop it. I wonder they have not brought in an Act of Parliament to stop unfavourable weather on the occasion of political demonstrations. By all means, make land as easily transferable as you can. Our opponents, in their speeches, say that we are opposed to passing measures for facilitating the transfer of land and cheapening it. The land belongs to a great number of people, and among them are many belonging to the Tory party, and do you suppose that we are possessed of a desire to pay inconceivable and monstrous lawyers' bills? They are as odious to the squire as to any other member of the human race. There is no squire who would not gladly welcome any measure for cheapening transfer of land. Having seen successively the great masters of the law address themselves to this great problem, and having seen my lawyer's bills concurrently increase by a steady ratio, I have become very sceptical of any promise of remedy in this respect. You may be quite certain that there is more than a desire on our part to make the transfer of land and its sale cheap. Mr. Goschen has told us that the transfer of land can be made as cheap and as easy as Consols—an observation which proves that Mr. Goschen knows more about Consols than land. If you have a bit of land and want to sell it, it is necessary that you should, in the first place, prove that you are the right person to sell it, and that it is not burdened by any mortgage which would

prevent you from selling. In these two difficulties lie the expense of the transfer. I have talked the matter over with my noble friend, the Lord Chancellor, and he, I am bound to tell you, is very sanguine about it. He says that he believes the thing can be done, and is not discouraged by the bones of the knights who have preceded him and been slain in this great enterprise, and wants to win the enchanted princess himself. He believes—and there is no man more competent to form an opinion—in a complete system of registration, so that the transfer of land might be cheap and easy. With respect to that belief, I will only say that the experiment ought to be tried. We ought to have compulsory registration of titles. If we cannot achieve the object, no harm has been done, and it will show that it is no fault of ours if the difficulties in land transfer continue. If it is successful, not only will the lawyers' bills be diminished, but every labouring man who is able to purchase will be able to attach himself to the freehold of the land. One of the absolute conditions of cheap transfer in land will be, to use a technical word, a short law prescription. That is to say, when a man has been the registered owner of land for a certain length of time, the title shall be absolute and indefeasible, and there shall be no more question about it. That is a point upon which you will come into conflict with an important authority, and that is the Court of Chancery. But I hope we shall overcome that. I am anxious to draw your attention to the proposal of Mr. Jesse Collings. He has a wonderful scheme for providing that anyone who has got roadside or common land within the last fifty years shall be put to the proof that he or his predecessors acquired it, and if they have not got such proof they shall lose the land if Mr. Collings' proposition is passed. The existing law says that after twelve years anyone occupying a bit of land is the owner of the land ; but Mr. Collings says no, that Act shall not apply. It would have the effect of doubling the cost of the transfer of land from one end of the country to the other. Every man who had bought a bit of land, would have to be quite certain that the land had not within fifty years been included in any portion of what was common land. It will be difficult to prove a negative, and it will be necessary not only to appeal to documents, but to the memory of the oldest inhabitant—a gentleman whose memory would have to be refreshed by

subsidies—whenever a transfer of land takes place. In addition to all the difficulties which now beset it, we should have to overcome these additional obstacles. I would venture to say that the requirement would add quite 100 per cent. to the cost of the transfer of land in every part of the country. I have quoted that in order to show you the recklessness with which these land propositions are made by people who have never gone out of the smoke of a smoky town, or the neighbourhood of a town-hall. If you want the land to be dealt with, I hope you will not consider it to be an assumption on my part, but I am afraid it must be dealt with by people who know something about land. If you hand it over to inveterate Cockneys, who know nothing but what they have read in magazines, you will only make ten times worse the evils you attempt to cure. There is one change I should like to advocate, which would place a great deal of land in the market, although I have my doubts as to who the purchasers of the land would be. I have observed during these years of depression that the position of clergymen who possess glebe land, and the position of charitable foundations dependent upon the same bequests of land is pitiable in the extreme. I have known men enjoying good incomes in the good times, quite suddenly reduced to poverty. Just consider the position of a clergyman who is left with a lot of land on his hands. He can raise no capital to work it. As a clergyman he can give no time to attend to it, for his time is fully occupied. No farmer will take the land. He is absolutely without resource, and the large income he enjoyed the day before has vanished like a dream. His case is bad enough; but what is the case of those small charitable foundations which you will find right through the country and upon which many orphans and widows are dependent? The land is thrown upon their hands, and the farmer will deal with it no longer. They cannot obtain capital, and it is a white elephant, which brings them nothing but ruin. I would like to see facilities placed in the hands of all clergymen and all ecclesiastical and charitable corporations to sell—always at a fair price and by a free contract—the land upon which their incomes depend. They would be much better off and much happier if their incomes were derived from Consols. I do not wish to apply any sort of compulsion to them. At present their liberty is restrained by a certain terrible central office which

exists in London, known as the Ecclesiastical Commission. I have had some dealings with it, and I avow that no consideration whatever should induce me to have any more. (Laughter.) I do not accuse them of any moral evil; it is the perfection of moral integrity. It is so spotless that they take every conceivable precaution that imagination can suggest to protect it, and they are so minute and so careful that it is impossible that any imperfection can find its way through the meshes they spread before it. I wish to get rid of the Ecclesiastical Commission. I would like to see every clergyman, or the trustees of every charitable society, have the right to sell their land and invest the proceeds in Consols, and, except in cases of manifest fraud, nobody should have the right to annul that transaction. You would then bring into market a quantity of land all over the country peculiarly suited for gardens and allotments, if such were desired, and which, if there exists this class of agricultural labourers who desire to become small farmers, would precisely suit their demands—land which in its present position would be better placed in the hands of any private owner, no matter to what class he belonged. I have shown you in what way, if I may use a vulgar simile, the wheels of land transfer might be greased. I believe it may very materially be simplified and cheapened. I do not believe that you will find any very large number of peasant proprietors spring out of the legislation which you authorise, and I do not believe it for this reason—that this great country has had a number of small freeholders from one end of the nation to the other, and for a hundred years and more the process has been that the owners of small freeholds have sold their lands and they have merged into the large freeholds. Casting all prejudices aside, can you misinterpret the meaning of this? Supposing you saw a hillside upon which the larch had grown and the beech had died, what would you think of any man who said, "I will cut down that larch and plant that beech, that the beech is the right thing and that the larch ought not to exist?" Would you not say that he was struggling against the laws of nature? And those who advocate an indiscreet and indiscriminate system of peasant proprietary, however estimable their motives, are committing as great an absurdity as the man who would try to force the hands of nature in the matter of the beech and larch. The truth is that that which was

prophesied at the time when the Corn Laws were abolished has, after a long delay, come to pass. The growing of wheat has become, over a vast extent of the country, an unprofitable occupation. A farmer knows that on the growing of wheat depends the continuance of arable land, for if the wheat crop does not pay, the chance of his arable land paying is very small. The consequence is that in every part of the country, especially on the east of the island, large tracts of land are going into grass. Grass does not pay well, but it pays moderately, and the landowner, farmer, proprietor, or occupier naturally takes to farming that which is most profitable to him, and the invariable result is that the number of hands required in agriculture diminishes—three men for every hundred acres required for arable land and one man to every hundred acres for pasture land. The irresistible force of economic facts is driving large tracts of the country from arable into pasturage. Is there any use, any wisdom, in expressing surprise at this, or in trying to resist the process, a process dictated by laws and powers higher than all the boasted omnipotence that Parliament can exercise? The result naturally is that large numbers of persons are out of employment. They get employment in towns, and diminish the wages of those already there. It is a very grievous process. I would to God we could arrest it, but we should only make it worse if we tried to arrest it in spite of the teachings of experience and the knowledge of political economy. You have heard of a proposal for diminishing this evil, for reversing the process that is taking place, for driving back the people who are leaving the country, and recultivating the land which has passed from arable to pasture. It is proposed that it should be done by the local authority; that the local authority should be empowered to take compulsorily land from whom it pleases at a price lower than that given at present, and that it should be empowered to let the land, in small farms of ten, fifteen, or twenty acres, to the labourers in each place. Is there anything in your experience of human affairs to induce you to believe that such a process would be successful? Consider what it involves. The local authority would have to borrow money in order to purchase the land. You borrow money at 4 per cent. Nobody succeeds in making more than 2 per cent. out of land. For every acre for which they borrow the difference between 2 per cent. and 4 per cent. would have

to be paid out of the rates. Supposing the price of land is £25 per acre. To purchase twelve acres of land you would have to give £300. You would get for that £6, you would pay for it £12, and £6 would have to be found out of the rates, and that £6 would be simply a present to the man whom you put into occupation of the land. It would be a revival of the old practice, abandoned fifty years ago, of subsidising land out of the rates. That is Mr. Chamberlain's proposal. Supposing it was good for the occupants, who is to choose among the competitors? Obviously, it would become a matter of favouritism dependent upon the way in which the local authority was elected, and, in the end, a matter of political corruption. This scheme is the budget of the caucus. It is the financial proposal by which the machinery of Birmingham is to be kept going. It is the mode of furnishing in each constituency in the country, voters who shall be bound by the clearest personal interests to vote as the wire-pullers of Birmingham shall tell them. That is the state of affairs as it affects persons who take land. But just consder how it affects persons from whom the land is taken The local authority has taken land at less than the price at which it is valued by the seller; and do you think that pover will not be exercised, and if a man resisted he would not be made to feel the supremacy of the local council? This is not a question for the rich only, because there are small landowners as well as large, and the power of the local council would extend to both. The large owner would be able to fight if threatened, whereas the small one would be utterly at the mercy of the local council and unable to say a word in his own behalf. That is the real secret of a proposal which offers no real relief for labouring men. Nobody thinks it will be possible for the occupants of land in small quantities to succeed where larger holders have failed. Men with capital, horses, and machinery have failed to make their holdings pay, and do you suppose that those men, with none of those things will be more successful? Agriculture is a pursuit in which remunerativeness depends upon being able to average bad seasons with good, but this poor men could not do. You may depend upon it there is no prospect of relief to the working men in this proposal. There is only the prospect of the most ingenious and careful political domination and corruption to which, if you

retain any of the instincts of free men, you will offer a very firm and unsparing opposition.

Now I think I have one matter more to talk of and that is the matter of free education. I think—and in this I believe I have the singular and unusual felicity of being in accord with Mr. Gladstone—that this question cannot be dealt with in the summary way that Mr. Chamberlain has dealt with it. No doubt the fact of the compulsory character of education does give to the poor of the country a very considerable claim. If the law says you shall have education, and they are unable to pay without enormous difficulty, then there is a reason why they should be assisted; but they are assisted under the present law, and I do not think that we should make presents of large sums of public money to people perfectly competent to pay for the education of their children. I should like to help the poor more liberally, and to enforce education without undue hardship; but I should shrink before I gave every subject of the Queen, whether rich or poor, the right to have his children educated at the public expense. I do not see any reason for adding to the public burdens, and I think it will be some time before the taxpayers will agree to such a proposition. As to religious education, which Mr. Morley desires to get rid of, it is one of our most cherished privileges. I am not speaking for my own Church alone. What I claim I would extend equally to the Nonconformists of Wales or to the Roman Catholics of Ireland. But I do claim that whatever Church or form of Christianity they belong to, there should be given the opportunity to educate the people in the belief of Christianity which they profess, instead of giving them a lifeless, boiled-down, mechanical, unreal religious teaching which is prevalent in the Board schools. Believe me, the essence of true religious teaching is that the teacher should believe that which he teaches, and should be delivering, as he believes it, the whole message of truth. Unless there is that sympathetic, that magnetic, feeling established between students and teachers that the teacher is dealing honestly with them, the public will believe that the religious teaching is a sham. Therefore, I would give the utmost freedom that could possibly be given to all denominations in this country to teach as they believe, and that which they esteem the highest religious truths of Christianity they profess. You have heard,

perhaps, too much in recent days of crime, and sins, and sorrows, which it is a shame to mention. You have heard statements of corruption, and you have heard proposals of legislation by which it was hoped that such corruption could be stemmed. There is only one remedy for such corruption, and that is the true teaching of the principles of Christianity. I ask you to defend, as citizens of your country, the right of our children to be taught the whole truth and be brought up as Christians, as we think they should, without any theories of side influence in secular doctrines, so as to be allowed to enter and diminish, and frustrate the highest privileges that we as Christians possess. And now, one more thing and I have done. You have read, no doubt, what I call that long and dreary epistle from the retirement of the late Prime Minister. You have seen how, amid other things, he has consigned to the category of doubtful matters which depend upon the majority of voices, his convictions and his course in reference to the Established Church of these islands. It is a shame that this crowning opinion has been spared to us. I confess I never believed that I should see Mr. Gladstone among those who would attempt to disestablish and disendow the Church of these islands. Deeply as we may lament this evidence of the power which party ties possess. we must not misinterpret the significance of this avowal or the duties it imposes upon us. It means that the time of ultimate and supreme conflict is at hand—that the danger which we have foreseen for many days is now close at our doors. It may come upon us in the present Parliament. The language that Mr. Chamberlain has used, the fact that he has used it without rebuke, the fact that he has been allowed to assume the leadership of the Liberal party, almost without hindrance or demur, shows that with the present Parliament you may have a proposal for the disendowment of the Church of this country, a proposal fraught with frightful disaster to the nation and more calamitous than any other change which has taken place. I see it is stated that other Churches in other countries succeed on the voluntary principle. Yes, the voluntary principle has grown up side by side with these Churches. In America the voluntary principle succeeded from the first because, when the Churches were few and the population small, the elementary principle was upheld, and the American Church is now endowed

in sufficient measure for her absolute necessities. Look at the Nonconformist bodies; their endowments have been built up from the outside, and they have resources at their command which might pay all the necessary claims which are made upon them, but that is not the case with the Church. The Church would be stripped and bare. In every part of the land the machinery by which God's word has been preached, by which Christianity has been upheld, by which all the ministrations of religion have been carried to suffering humanity would be put an end to. All this machinery would by this one blow be destroyed, and generations would be required before it could be replaced. This it is with a light heart Mr. Gladstone is prepared to sacrifice. We can only accept his announcement as a call to greater energy and preparation on our part. We can have no sympathy with those who think that by supporting the Liberal party now they may get better terms when the catastrophe comes further on. There are Liberal Churchmen whose action in this great crisis has been without parallel. I can understand a man who thinks that the interest of the Church is inferior to the interest of the party; and thinks that to support a leader is more important than to keep up the basis for the teaching of Christian religion, which has been preached for over a thousand years. Those who are of an opposite mind, and I believe them to be numerous, those Liberal Churchmen who think the interests of the Church are the most important matter in the field of political controversy, I would have them consider the course they would pursue, now it is announced, and not in an obscure kind of way, that their leader is prepared to see the Church disestablished when there is a convenient opportunity. They must know the important stake for which the contest is being waged. Liberal Churchmen who now support the Liberal party, after the declarations that are being made, are supporting the machinery to destroy that which they hold most dear. They are, therefore, a weapon by which the Church is to be struck down. I cannot conceive what the sophistry is that induces them to vote for those who are ready to undertake the destruction of the mechanism by which Christianity has been upheld in this country. We can talk in no ambiguous language to these men. It is a matter of life and death to us. Our party is bound up with the maintenance of the established and endowed Church of the country.

We hear many prophecies as to the result of the coming election, and some of our adversaries talk in sanguine language. Perhaps what has recently taken place in France may teach some Opportunists in this country the wisdom of modesty in prediction. But, be that as it may, we do not look to the result; we look to the principles we uphold, by which we are bound in conscience to the tradition of our party, and, as men of honour, to stand or fall. We can admit in these matters no compromise, no hope that we shall support any proposal for the overthrow or injury of that which we hold so dear—the maintenance of the framework of our Constitution, the upholding of the rights of property, and, more than all, the support of that sacred institution which is supported by ancient endowments, and by the recognition of the authority of the State, which now, for generation after generation, in Scotland and in England, has held up the torch of truth and has maintained those truths of Christianity before the world. To that, as a party, as honest men, as Christians, we are irrevocably bound.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT was a born fighter, who loved political conflict for its own sake, delighting in the cut and thrust of debate, as in the polemics of the platform. His knowledge of Parliamentary history was very wide, and he was devoted to Parliamentary tradition, a firm believer in the House of Commons. He had studied the annals of the Whig party with peculiar care, and held that political problems could best be solved by adapting Whig principles to modern conditions. He combined the old and the new with great skill, so that his speeches are at once rhetorical and practical, eloquent and effective, vigorous contributions to the controversies of the day, and at the same time suggestive of the manner in which our constitutional development has proceeded. He belongs rather to the older than the more modern school of English oratory. His style, though simple in substance, was elaborate in form, and always carefully prepared. He was one of the few speakers whose speeches were good both to hear and to read. From a platform he put plain ideas into straightforward, vigorous language, which left nothing unfinished or obscure. In the House of Commons he would have been a more effective debater if he had been less dependent upon prepared phraseology. But that defect disappears altogether in reports, and, therefore, Harcourt's speeches are literature in a rhetorical form, which can be read with pleasure by anyone understanding the circumstances of their delivery. One of his best and most characteristic efforts was his defence of his own great Budget, delivered on the second reading of the Finance Bill in 1894. The Bill itself was necessarily encumbered with detail. But in this speech Harcourt threw aside secondary questions, as better suited for the stage of Committee, and applied himself to the task of explaining

the principles on which he had proceeded. He had two great qualifications for this performance. In the first place, he had thoroughly mastered every point of his scheme as related to every other. In the second place, he could show that the governing considerations of the whole were few and clear, capable of being set forth with striking effect, and, at the same time, with accurate lucidity. When Harcourt was not dealing with facts, he was apt to be led astray by the temptations which beset masters of words, and to exaggerate the significance of an argument or an analogy. But when, as in this case, he had a definite policy in his mind, the tendency was corrected by the limits he himself imposed, and the result exhibited all his powers at their best without any drawback. Few men have combined better than Harcourt the qualities of a popular orator with those of a practical politician. A speech, therefore, in which he was defending a Budget of his own affords ample scope for setting his especial endowments side by side.

Second Reading of the Budget Bill, 1894

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, on rising, was received with loud cheering, said—

After this long and protracted debate, I am glad that we have at last arrived at the point which is to determine the fate of the Budget. (Cheers.) The right honourable gentleman who has just sat down has admitted that the course which the Opposition have taken on this occasion is absolutely without precedent. (Cheers.) He knows as well as I know that the second reading of a Bill brought forward by the Government to carry out the financial arrangements necessary to meet the obligations of the State has never before been met by an amendment to read the Bill a second time that day six months. The moving of such an amendment is a measure far more extreme than that of stopping the supplies. On former, but on rare, occasions, amendments have been moved on a second reading of a Budget Bill, but they have been amendments which have fixed upon some particular point, and they have generally, I

think universally, been moved by some responsible man. I do not complain of this proceeding, because I know that it is not aimed so much at the life of the Budget as at the life of the Government. It was thought well to spread the net wide enough to embrace all those who, whatever their views might be on finance, desire to overthrow the Administration. The temptation of securing the aid of an Irish contingent was too great to be resisted. I do not complain that the right honourable gentlemen opposite have succumbed to it. There is, however, one advantage in the form of this motion, for which I welcome it. It dispenses me altogether from going into all those dreary and minute particulars which belong to Committee, and which are not appropriate to the second reading of this Bill. The opposition to the measure has raised what the lawyers call "the general issue" upon the principles of the Budget, and I am glad of it because it enables us to do to-night what we most desire; namely, to take the opinion of this House first and of the country afterwards—do not be in a hurry, we cannot do it to-night—upon the principles on which the financial proposals of the Government are based. The course of this discussion has followed pretty accurately upon the lines upon which it was originally launched. The twin champions who moved and seconded this amendment represented the two most powerful and the two closest monopolies in this country, the monopoly of land and the monopoly of liquor. That was an antagonism for which Her Majesty's Government were perfectly prepared. I will deal first with what I may, without disrespect to honourable members opposite, call the liquor of the Opposition. The right honourable gentleman has accused me of not only taxing the liquor interest, but of insulting it. But why does he say that I insulted it? He said first of all that I have violated all the principles of finance formerly held on this side of the House. One of his charges against me was that I had said this tax would not fall upon the consumer, but upon the trade. That is precisely what his own Chancellor of the Exchequer said when he put on his duty on the liquor interest. I quoted the language in my Budget speech of that right honourable gentleman. This is the language of the right honourable gentleman—

"I beg the Committee to observe, therefore, that I am obtaining my revenue by the addition of a tax which cannot be

felt by the consumer." That is the charge the right honourable gentleman brings against me, and then he says that I am attacking the liquor interest as no Chancellor of the Exchequer ever did before, and upon principles which I ought not to have adopted. The right honourable gentleman the member for Midlothian (Mr. Gladstone) said that "We ought to raise the duty on them as much as we can, consistently with the policy and the necessity for preventing the growth of a contraband trade." The right honourable gentleman contrasted that with other trades, on which he said we ought to lower the tax as much as possible. There are people who accuse me personally, as well as in my capacity of Chancellor of the Exchequer, of having brought forward these proposals out of spite. I do not believe there is anyone in this House, who really thinks that is so. (Cheers.) I have made these proposals not upon social, but exclusively upon fiscal, grounds. I stated in my Budget speech that I had taken means to ascertain that the trade was in a condition in which a further tax might be imposed upon it without oppression, and I stated at that time that this was a trade which was making large profits, and that, if that was challenged, I should be prepared to prove it. I will now give the House facts which will show that I was justified in my assertion. Of course I am not going to give the names of individual firms. In 1884 the total profits of the trade assessed in the income tax returns was £6,316,000; in 1893-4 it was £10,177,000—an increase of nearly four millions, or nearly 40 per cent. in the course of those ten years, and the remarkable thing is that the increase took place, and has gone on notwithstanding the increase in the duties which was placed upon the trade by the right honourable gentleman opposite, and which was so much complained of. What is the history of these extraordinary profits? I stated in my Budget speech, and I now repeat, that the main cause of these large profits is the great fall in the price of the materials employed. I have before me a list of the various articles, showing the fall that has occurred in each during the past twenty years. I find in that period that the materials used by brewers have fallen on an average about 30 per cent. The fall in malt has been 44 per cent.; in sugar, 37 per cent.; rice, 23 per cent.; hops, 14 per cent.; barley, 30 per cent.; oats, 28 per cent.; maize, 34 per cent.; and molasses 21 per cent. In the case of an article using materials

which have fallen to that extent you would naturally expect, its selling price not having materially altered, that the profits would be very large. Yet when these gentlemen are asked to come forward to take a share in meeting the extra demands which it is necessary to make upon the country they decline. But, indignant as they are, they tell us at the same time that they are not going to suffer by the new tax. The member for Wimbledon (Mr. Bonsor), with a cheerful countenance, told us that the trade will not suffer at all; that they will take care of themselves. All the tears of the honourable member were reserved for the growers of barley. He told us that the brewers were always anxious to use the best English barley, and he pointed out that in 1876 barley was 45s. 6d., while in 1893 it was only 28s. 10d., per quarter. But if he was so anxious to buy, and could buy, good barley at that price, why did he not buy it and use it exclusively? But the honourable member further went on to tell us that between 1876 and 1893, the consumption of sugar had increased between two and three fold, until, in 1893, it had reached the enormous total which he gave us. Here is the friend of the English barley-grower, who can buy barley at half the price it was some years ago, and yet buys sugar to that enormous extent. The honourable member also went on to tell us about raw grain, and he stated that at the Brewers' Institute it was agreed that 10 per cent. of raw grain could be used without injuring the quality of the beer. Why, Sir, does anybody believe that the brewers in the past have not used the article which they could buy at the cheapest rate, and that they will not do so in the future as in the past? I think, then, I may leave the solicitude of the honourable member for Wimbledon for the English barley-growers to take care of itself, for he did not contend that the brewers would suffer, but told us they would take care of themselves. But there was another champion of the brewing interest who came forward; the honourable member for Mid-Armagh (Mr. Barton), who spoke in behalf of the great firm of Guinness. Now his solicitude was not for the English barley-growers, but for the small brewers. He did not pretend that the firm of Guinness was going to suffer, but he wept tears—I might almost call them tears of the Saurian species—over the small brewers. But what is it that has destroyed the small brewers?

Why, it is the gigantic monopolies which bought up all the free public-houses, and turned them into tied houses. And these are the sort of reasons which are brought forward by members of the House of Commons.

Mr. BARTON: I beg to say that the house of Guinness never had or owned a tied house, and never had a public-house, and the observations of the right honourable gentleman had no reference to that subject whatsoever.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I accept what the honourable member has said, but it does not alter the absolute truth of the statement that the small brewers of this country have disappeared under the influence of these great monopolies which have established the system of tied houses. They are doing so day by day, and we know that the competition between these great houses is making it more and more necessary for them to buy up houses to the disadvantage of the small brewers. The right honourable gentleman said I had behaved very unfairly towards the licensed victuallers in the statement I made with reference to their profits. I only stated what I knew to be the fact because it had been so ascertained. One of the members of Surrey, who spoke with great authority also on behalf of the trade, gave figures of the profits—not of the sales—of licensed victuallers, and he stated that the profit was 30 per cent.

Mr. COMBE: The profit of 33 per cent. which I gave was the gross profit and not the net profit.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I cannot argue with the honourable member. I thought he was referring to the profit after deducting all expenses which were involved in serving out two-pennyworth of gin. At any rate, I believe the profit on the two-pennyworth is a great deal upwards of 100 per cent. Before I leave this liquor question I should like to know what is the financial position which the responsible gentlemen opposite are prepared to adopt on this liquor question. Do you accept to-night, by the alliance you have made and by the vote you are about to give, the principle that beer cannot and ought not to bear additional taxation? With the prospect of great and increasing expenditure, are you going to cut off from yourselves, in order that you may get a vote against the Government to-night, the taxation of beer and spirits? What are you going to tax, since you have

promised and vowed to these gentlemen that beer and spirits ought not to be taxed? Are you going to tax tea? Are you going to tax sugar? Are you going to tax corn? If you are not, and you want more money, are you going to put it on the income tax? Before I leave this question of spirits, I ought to say a word upon the speech, the very moderate and able speech, of the honourable member for North Dublin (Mr. Clancy). He gave some figures of what he supposed would be the effect of the tax we were going to impose upon Ireland. I very much regret that I have not been able—I hope to be in a day or two—to lay an accurate return on the table of the House showing the exact bearing of the tax we propose upon Ireland. The figures he gave are not those at which we have arrived. There is one small error in his calculation I should like to correct. He spoke of the taxation we are about to raise as £2,300,000. The additional taxation we propose is £2,670,000. We estimate the beer and spirit duties at £130,000; the additional income tax with abatement £40,000; the estate duties only £30,000, for this reason, first of all, graduation will not largely obtain in Ireland on account of the smallness of the estates, and, secondly, that upon land no estate duty will be collected during the present year either in England or in Ireland, for the period of the passing of the Bill will be such that it will be impossible to collect any estate duty on land during the financial year. The honourable member for North Armagh (Major Saunderson) talked of the industry of brewers and distillers in Ireland being in a bad condition. That is an error on his part. The number of distillers has not fallen off during the last ten years, and their profits have increased from £280,000 in 1884 to £315,000 in 1893; and as regards the brewers, the profits assessed to the income tax have increased from £486,000 in 1884 to £875,000 in 1893, or nearly double. Therefore the view that the honourable gentleman took that these are waning industries is not well founded. Then the right honourable gentleman the member for St. George's (Mr. Goschen) severely criticised my method of dealing with these duties, of dealing with them temporarily. Well, Sir, the right honourable gentleman has characteristic methods of his own which I have not thought it right to imitate. In 1889 he proposed an additional duty on beer and, under pressure from the honourable member for Wimbledon, he held out hopes that if the revenue permitted

a remission of taxation that duty would be taken off the next year.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I did not say that. I did not use those words.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Well, I copied them this morning. These conditions were fulfilled. The revenue did admit of a reduction in the next year, and in fulfilment of his pledge, the right honourable gentleman stated in his speech on the Budget that the increased beer duty would be remitted that year for Imperial purposes, and then, at the end of his speech, he proceeded to reimpose it for purposes of local taxation to replace his unfortunate wheel and van tax. Well, that is characteristic of the right honourable gentleman. I prefer my direct methods to such shifty finance as that. I do not know whether the brewing interest would be particularly pleased if I were to imitate the example of the right honourable gentleman.

I now come, Sir, to the other great protagonists against the Budget—I mean the landed interest. They come forward, as they always have come forward, to insist on their privilege of exemption from taxation. Of course I do not expect honourable gentlemen opposite to agree with me. We propose, under this estate duty, to raise a million this year. It is sometimes said "Is it worth while to do all this to raise a million?" That is not the proposal. Our proposal is to raise a tax of between three and a half millions and four millions ultimately, to add to the resources of the country. Now, the proportion formed by realty to personalty is one-fifth of the total of the capital of the country. The capital of the country has been estimated—I do not say it is a correct estimate, but it is commonly accepted—at £2,200,000,000, and out of that £400,000,000 is the proportion of realty. It now pays £1,150,000 out of £10,000,000 to the death duties. Under our scheme it will pay £2,500,000 out of £13,500,000, or a little less than one-fifth. If it paid its full proportion it would pay £2,750,000 instead of £2,500,000. The figures we have given on the subject have been disputed. They were disputed by the honourable member for Surrey. He was good enough to tell me frankly the grounds on which he objected to this increase, and he showed me a list of some estates which had been examined. Those estates were all settled estates, subject to graduation, and most of them

London estates. When I looked at those estates I said, "If you will only allow me to read this list to the House, I think you will carry the Budget by acclamation." There is no doubt that in estates of that character a large amount of additional taxation will be raised. That is our object; but upon the moderate estates really the increase will be extremely small. I may remind the House that when they speak of realty great confusion arises. Realty means land and it means houses. Of this, land, in the ordinary sense of the word, is the smaller moiety. It represents £600,000 of the additional taxation we propose to raise, which is about one-sixth of the whole. It is to be subject to a recoupment upon Schedule A of £160,000; and though I do not say that our calculation is absolutely accurate, it rests on the most experienced knowledge of men with the fullest materials at their disposal as to what will be the result of the taxation. From whom does this complaint come? It does not come from realty in the proper sense of the word. We have heard complaints of the land as distinguished from the houses; we have heard very little complaint of the settled personalty which will come under this additional taxation. We have heard little from the other realty which is not agricultural land. They apparently are not unwilling to take their share in the burdens which must fall on the nation. But in addition to the liquor interest, we have had those strong complaints from the landed interest. The leaseholder is a very important section of the community. He is already subject to the whole weight of this taxation which the freeholder in land refuses to accept. The grounds on which this refusal is based are mainly two; first, the payment of rates. The right honourable gentleman opposite undertook to redress this inequality three or four years ago. He stated that he had redressed that inequality, and upon that occasion, or immediately afterwards, the right honourable member for Sleaford, speaking on behalf of the Government on a motion that the death duties ought to be equalised because this compensation had been given in respect of rates, said: "The occupier pays a certain sum for the use of the land, and in that sum are included rates as well as taxes. The effect on the owner is that if the rates are high, he gets less rent, and if they are low, he gets more rent; and I maintain it is not difficult to show that the whole burden of the rates falls

upon the owner of the land and upon no one else." On that the right honourable member for Midlothian remarked on the importance of that statement. He pointed out with reference to those subsidies of which the right honourable gentleman was the author, that an actual gift of £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 had been made to the owners of land. (Mr. Goschen dissented.) These are the words—

"But this fact stands, that as the whole of that portion of £6,000,000 which went to the relief of the rates fell on the rural land, it is in the long run, a sheer, unmixed, undiluted gift to the landlord." That is the statement which I wish to place on record, and a most important statement it is. It becomes the habit of honourable gentlemen to refer to the statements of the right honourable Member for Midlothian in 1853. "There is a point I want to notice in the speech of the right honourable gentleman because he did me the honour to refer to a speech made by me in 1853 on the subject of the Income tax, and he has founded on that reference to my speech a case of grievance for the land. These are the circumstances in which I endeavoured to show that land under Schedule A pays more than sevenpence in the pound, and that the burden upon it is greater than it is commonly supposed to be. My right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer reminds me it might be urged that has been redressed by the contribution. If we are to speak of that, I will say in my opinion it has been a great deal more than redressed by that contribution. The fact is that while realty has received an enormous boon at the expense of the Consolidated Fund—a boon of which the whole in the case of rural land goes to the landlord, and of which a large part, not the whole, in the case of land not rural goes to the landlord—while that boon has been given to the landlords of the country in rural and urban districts and is a charge on the Consolidated Fund, a compensation has been given to the Consolidated Fund in return, which is, I believe I am right in saying, a few hundred odd thousands. The question between the rates and the Consolidated Fund is not a settled question. No proper equivalent, no fair and proper consideration, has been given to the Consolidated Fund by a readjustment of taxation in respect of that enormous boon which has been handed over to the rates; and a further and larger

change than has yet been made in the death duties is, in my opinion, a matter of absolute necessity on the plainest grounds of justice before Parliament will have fully vindicated its character as a just distributor of benefits and burdens among the several classes of the community."

The landlords have received satisfaction in respect of rates, and it is time we should equalise the rates. The other objection on the part of the landed interest is one, the truth of which I most absolutely acknowledge. They say that agricultural land has fallen in value and also the income. That is unfortunately true, but it is on that diminished income, and on that alone, that the tax will be placed. They will have to pay upon what they have, and not upon what they have not. I have endeavoured to show the House how small that amount will be, but we have examples—I do not say wisely—brought forward as exceptions to the great principles of finance of the inconvenience which may fall on particular persons and in particular cases. The honourable member for the West Derby Division of Liverpool brought forward the case of the estate of Savernake, and remarked upon what difficulty the present owner of Savernake would be placed in by this legislation. But we cannot found legislation in finance of this character upon the difficulties of an estate in the condition of Savernake. The right honourable member for Sleaford came forward, and he passed an eulogium upon an estate in exactly the opposite category—an eulogium in which I desire to associate myself—the great estate of Chatsworth, which has been administered for generations in a manner to the advantage of its possessors and of the country. But when he tells me that taxation of this character is going to destroy the magnificent fortune of Chatsworth, that is an argument that carries little weight with me.

Mr. CHAPLIN: The right honourable gentleman entirely misrepresents me. I did speak of Chatsworth, but I merely mentioned Chatsworth as a type of a great number of others which it resembled.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I am very glad to hear that Chatsworth represents a great many other estates, because, if so, the landed interest is not so badly off. But a still more extraordinary argument was used by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Balfour) just now. He said that

Holland House, under these circumstances, might be driven to be turned into a building estate. I am sorry to say that a good deal of Holland House, as I first recollect it, has been, without this Bill. But you cannot deal with broad questions of finance—

Mr. BALFOUR: I did not use that as an argument in favour of the owner of Holland House, but as an argument in favour of the public. It was a public loss.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: If turning any of Holland House into a building estate was a public loss, a great deal of it has been lost already since I first came to London. But you cannot deal with great questions of finance by considerations of particulars of this character. But, Sir, I observe in all these debates, though you put forward Savernake, Chatsworth, and Holland House, there is one class of landowners who have prudently kept in the background—namely, the great owners of ground values. It is upon them, as they know perfectly well, that the chief burden of this taxation will fall, and therefore they have put forward the case of every other class first—the yeoman farmer, the licensed victualler, or the ruined brewer. There is an idea in private circles, I believe, that there are dukes who expect that they may lose millions of money over this system, and, if so, I suppose it is because there will be millions to meet the demand. That brings me to the question of graduation. The right honourable gentleman, the leader of the Opposition, commenced his speech this evening by criticising the fact that I, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had a colleague in Lord Rosebery who favoured all the schemes I brought forward. I am sorry I cannot congratulate him in return on having treated his Chancellor of the Exchequer in the same favourable manner. The right honourable member for St. George's, Hanover Square, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. denounced the principle of graduation in the strongest terms, and applied to it such words as "plunder" and "fiscal robbery," and he reproached me, his unworthy pupil, with being ignorant of the elementary principles of political economy. He quoted something from the works of Sir Louis Mallet, and he told me that no great economist had ever been in favour of graduation. He even went so far as to refer to John Stuart Mill as an authority for that statement. I certainly was

surprised that he was so ignorant of the fundamental difference of taxation which would arise from the system of graduation duties and the income tax respectively that he did not even realise that one was a tax paid by the living and the other a tax levied upon the dead. I will now read you passages from some authorities in support of our scheme to impose additional death duties. The passage from Mill's book is as follows:

> The principle of graduation, as it has been called—that is the levying of a higher percentage on larger sums—though its application to general taxation would be a violation of first principles, is quite unobjectionable as applied to legacies and inheritances. I conceive inheritances and legacies exceeding a certain amount to be a highly proper subject of taxation, and that the revenue from them should be as great as it can be made without giving rise to evasion.

There was a passage referred to the other night by my honourable friend the member for Aberdeen, where Adam Smith, after referring to the necessaries and luxuries of life, said it was not unreasonable that the rich should contribute not only in proportion to their revenue but something more than that proportion. Is that not the principle of graduation? What was the proposal of the right honourable gentleman with regard to house duties but graduation on a lower scale? The right honourable gentleman, I think, before he undertakes to assail the principle of graduation, should be a little more careful in the citing of his authorities and a little more careful in quoting them. But is graduation to be condemned on another ground? The right honourable gentleman has never been so insulted as by my quoting the case of the Australian colonies. He says that the land ruined by Australian mutton is now to be wiped out by Australian finance. That is the language of the Imperial party. These are the advocates of the federation of the Empire. Is he going to keep out Australian mutton, which gives cheap food to the working classes? Why should he have such a contempt for Australian finance? Land is the principal capital of Australia, and their experience in dealing with it is very valuable. They have great advantages there which we have not in England. There land is free from fetters, and you may depend upon it that day by day the people of this country will become more desirous that land should be treated as land is treated in Australia—exactly on the same footing as personal property.

The sneers of the right honourable gentleman at Australia will come home to roost. Very often smart sayings are very foolish things. I have a little refreshed the memory of the right honourable gentleman as to the views of the doctors of political economy upon the question of graduation. I confess myself that I do not abide altogether by the dogmas of the professors upon this question. As on the bimetallic controversy, when I find all the professors on one side and all the men of business on the other, I follow the men of business. In this case, with regard to graduation, you do not want the professors to teach you whether men of immense fortune, like ground landlords, or whether millionaire brewers should pay something more *pro rata* than the small struggling man of narrow means. That question will not be settled by the professors; it will be settled by the common-sense and justice of the community at large. The right honourable gentleman said he did not absolutely commit his party against graduation, but for fear that should not take effect, the right honourable member for Sleaford got up, hammered the nail in, and pronounced graduation to be *anathema maranatha;* but the right honourable member for St. George's seemed a little timid and did not pronounce quite in the same sense. If my predecessor and my successor hold these views on graduation, that will go a long way to settle the question. But there are other political forces in this country, and I should like to know what the views of Birmingham are upon this subject. Graduation is now part of the authorised programme of the Liberal party; but it was part also of the famous Unauthorised Programme. These were once the views of Birmingham upon this question:—

> In my opinion, there is only one way in which this injustice of the incidence of taxation—this injustice of the greater weight of taxation upon the poor—can properly be remedied; and that is by a scheme of graduated taxation, a taxation which increases in proportion to the amount of property taxed. It need not necessarily be a graduated income tax; it might be more convenient to levy it in the form of a graduated death tax. I do not care anything at all about the method; all I want to offer for your serious consideration is the principle of such taxation; in my opinion it is the only principle of taxation fair and just to all classes of the community.

Now, Sir, I should like to know, comparing that with the speech which we heard the other night from the right honourable

member for St. George's, which of these two conflicting authorities is in the future to govern coalition finance? Which is to be the "predominant partner" in that mixed concern? Then the right honourable gentleman opposite sets up two totally inconsistent arguments. He says that the death duty will be "evaded," but as a future Chancellor of the Exchequer, he retracts that offensive word and says it will be avoided. There was a time when the right honourable gentleman denounced settlements as a fraud upon the Exchequer. If the duties are going to be avoided there can be no hardship, and if they are paid they will not be avoided; you cannot have it both ways. The right honourable gentleman put a most extraordinary case—the case of the duty being at the highest possible rate. What is the highest possible rate under the present proposal? It is 18 per cent. What is it at present? It is 14 per cent. Do you mean to tell me that if the duties are not evaded at 14 per cent., they will be totally evaded because it is raised to 18 per cent.?

Mr. GOSCHEN: Aggregate values?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Aggregate values. We at least have placed this principle of graduation before the country as a just system of taxation. We have placed it before the country and we have placed it before the House to-night as a fundamental principle of Liberal finance. If you get rid of this Budget, you will not get rid of the principle of graduation. It will survive the factious combinations of to-night. If you desire to go to the country against the principle of graduation, we are ready to meet you. You have before you a future of ever-increasing expenditure, demands not only for the Army and Navy, but for every kind of social reform. You will have increased taxation, and you will find that these vast fortunes cannot refuse to bear their share proportionate to their ability to endure the burden. And I will venture upon this prediction. You may have to accept, and you very likely will yourselves propose, provisions less moderate than those contained in this Bill. You have done that before. What has the right honourable gentleman said upon the subject of the income tax? Here, again, we have, I won't say the advantage, we have the disadvantage of being in direct opposition to the right honourable gentleman the member for St. George's. Here, again, the leader of the

Opposition took the extraordinary course of throwing overboard his own Chancellor of the Exchequer. The very strongest part of the speech of the right honourable member for St. George's was his denunciation of what we had done in the Budget—that is to say to extend the limit and to enlarge the abatement. He said it was destructive of the income tax, and he denounced it in the most vehement language. And at the very beginning of his speech the leader of the Opposition says that is the part of the Budget of which he most approves. The right honourable gentleman said and the leader of the Opposition repeated it, that I had voted against that proposal. The right honourable member for St. George's "told" against that proposal in that division, but he did not "tell" me, and in that he was mistaken. But of all the charges brought against me by the member for St. George's the most vehement, I think, was that which he made against me in reference to this extension of the abatement. But, Sir, the ground on which we have proceeded, the ground which the right honourable gentleman denounced as mischievous, socialistic, and destructive of the income tax, was thus described by the financier whom he was then opposing. Sir Stafford Northcote referred to the hardships endured by one portion of the trading classes—the struggling professional men and the struggling tradesmen—upon whom the income tax pressed most severely. He said that, "in reply to official inquiries which he had made he had been informed that those who would profit most by the revision were a very large number of clergy, ministers of all religious denominations, a large number of officers in the Army and Navy, a large portion of the Civil Service—struggling men in all positions, some of whom were just getting their heads above water—many tradesmen, and the widows and single daughters of all these classes." The right honourable gentleman denounced that policy and divided against it.

Mr. GOSCHEN: That was the policy of the right honourable member for Midlothian.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: That may be; but we have had experience of it for eighteen years. The right honourable gentleman is of the same opinion now, and he denounces it still. If you defeat this Budget every one of those classes will lose this advantage.

Mr. BALFOUR: The right honourable gentleman did not hear my speech evidently.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I heard the right honourable gentleman's speech, but is the right honourable member for St. George's to be the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the party opposite? It is impossible for a man to have pledged himself more definitely against this principle. There are three doctrines of finance. There is the doctrine of the leader of the Opposition; there is the doctrine of what we may call the future Chancellor of the Exchequer; and there is the Birmingham doctrine which cannot be reconciled with either. This is the one great crime I have committed with reference to the income tax. I have proposed these exemptions. I do not know whether you mean to go to the country against those exemptions. But there is one exemption against which the right honourable gentleman did not protest —one compensation under the income tax—and that was the grant to the landowners. He had nothing to say against that. Well, it is a little characteristic, the way in which that compensation has been received. Up to this time, we have always been told that it was an enormous loss to the landed interest, this distinction under Schedule A—that it far more than outweighed the advantages they derived under it. The moment it is given, they say "Thank you for nothing"; they put the money into their pockets, and are not even thankful. The landed interest may behave in this way, but the relief is not so regarded by the owners of small house property. I have received letters from all parts of the country most grateful for the concession made. There was a small man who said he had put his earnings into house property, and he wrote "The news is too good to be true. I am told we are to have 10 per cent. upon house property." I wrote to him and said: Dear Sir,—The news is better than you believe, because you are to have 16 per cent." The most important part of all is the treatment which the small properties will gain under this Bill. I have always regarded the right honourable gentleman the leader of the Opposition as the great apostle of the gospel of wealth. These considerations lie below his political horizon; but I wish to call attention to the effect of this Budget upon small property. While it provides for a permanent increase of more than £4,000,000 in the national resources, it makes no

increase, but a decrease, on the different classes of persons owning under £1,000. Taking the death duties alone, there is a decrease upon taxation of this class, and taking the death duties and the income tax together there is a much larger decrease. Properties under £1,000 pay to the existing death duties upwards of £300,000 a year, while under the new system, with legacy and succession duty swept away, with the single equal duty of 1 per cent. up to £500 and 2 per cent. up to £1,000, they will pay about £200,000 per year. I say nothing about the saving of expense and trouble by extending the facilities from properties of £300 to properties of £1,000. It comes to this—that the measure will have the effect of increasing the death duties as a whole by one-third, and at the same time of reducing by one-third the payments of these small people. Under the head of personalty alone, there are no fewer than 39,000 of these small estates out of a total of 51,000 in 1892-3. The reduction is not so large on the death duties, but it is much larger upon the income tax. I would like to give a typical case—that of a man dying with personalty worth £500. Take the case of a small tenant farmer leaving £500, or a small shop-keeper or clerk leaving a similar sum. At present such a property pays a *minimum* duty of £10, and it may, under the legacy duty, have to pay as much as £59. In future, under the Government proposals, it will pay £5 only, and under no circumstances will it have to pay more. Surely this will be a great benefit and boon to an enormous proportion of the population. Now I will touch upon the death duties. What may reasonably be taken to be the income of a man, who leaves a capital sum of £500, the result of his personal exertions? We may take it to be £200 a year. He will gain under the Budget provisions £1 6s. 8d. a year on his income tax, so that he will be able to discharge in four years all the liability of his property under the death duties. Depend upon it that the country is going to judge between us. There are things more cared for in the country than Savernake or Chatsworth. In the case of realty, we come to the same holdings of £500 value, which is a very common kind of property. Taking the least favourable case, such a property left by a man to his son aged forty-four will, under the Budget scheme, never pay more than £5. The Budget, while it confers a great boon to the farmers in respect of their stock, lessens the

amount of the income tax they will have to pay. I have to apologise to the House for having occupied their time for so long, but I have endeavoured to draw their attention, not to the paltry details of the Bill, not to the anticipations with which the right honourable gentleman has filled so much of his speech, but with regard to which I think that the authorities of the Inland Revenue, by whom I am advised, know a great deal more than the right honourable gentleman as to the methods and the possibilities of carrying them into operation, but to the great principles of the Bill. I am glad that by the help of the right honourable gentleman the member for St. George's this question has been extracted from the chicane of paltry details; and has been reduced to a conflict on fundamental principles, and that we have at last come to a clear issue on conflicting principles of finance. Given the necessity for raising large sums for increased defence, how is the money to be got? We affirm and you deny that the powerful and wealthy interests should make a further contribution. Secondly, we affirm and you deny that for the purposes of the death duties realty and personalty should be treated alike.

Mr. BALFOUR: No, I did not.

The CHANCELLER OF THE EXCHEQUER: Then why do you want to throw out the Budget? We affirm and you deny—I do not know which of you is going to deny—that taking a moderate system of graduation, immense wealth should pay at a higher rate than smaller estates. That is a clear issue. We affirm and you deny—it remains to be seen how long you will venture to deny—that if great expenditure requires a high rate of income tax, the burden should fall more lightly on the humbler incomes; and until the late First Lord of the Treasury and the late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Balfour and Mr. Goschen were sitting side by side on the front Opposition bench) can make up their minds on the subject of finance, you are not entitled to throw out the Budget. These are clear issues which try the principles of the Tory party.

Mr. BALFOUR: No, they do not.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: If I may use a vulgar expression, I would venture to say that you are beginning to see that it is not safe to face the music. Against these

principles you array yourselves to-night. I know not whether that strange combination which you have entered into with those to whom, on vital questions, you are most opposed, will assist you to-night. But, if you should defeat this Budget, you will not defeat the principles on which it is founded, those principles being based on equal taxation adjusted to the capacity of the various classes to bear the burden. We challenge the vote of the House of Commons to-night, and when the time comes we shall ask the judgment of the country.

THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE

WHEN Lord Hartington sat in the House of Commons, he seldom took much trouble to prepare himself for any debate. But he knew what occasions were really important, and when they happened they did not find him at a loss. No one, for instance, could have delivered a better defence than he did of the policy which regarded Afghanistan as beyond the limits of the frontier which the masters of India had to guard. His first official speech after he had taken office as Secretary of State for India in 1880 was a most powerful and cogent plea for the evacuation of Candahar, and for the recognition of Abdul Rahman as the ruler of a united Afghanistan. It was characteristic of Lord Hartington that he did not give continuous attention to the development and history of questions, but that he put off getting them up until they were ripe for Parliamentary treatment. Then he brought his mind to bear upon them, and showed his faculty of concentration by mastering their essence without wasting time over irrelevant details. Great subjects, such as Home Rule and Tariff Reform, roused all his energy and capacity. At ordinary times he was content to handle the topics which came before him with the amount of force required to explain them, and put them in a clear light. He had the gift, not always possessed by the most distinguished advocates, of picking out the strong arguments for a case, and leaving the weak arguments alone. This particular art has not perhaps received all the consideration it deserves. There is no surer method of saving time and economising labour. It is frequently, though fallaciously, assumed that the strength of a position may be measured by the number of reasons which can be given in its support. Even those who do not assume that all reasons are equally good, are too apt to estimate the cogency of a plea by the copiousness of its justification.

The Home Rule Bill of 1886

The Marquis of Hartington, in rising to move "That the Bill be read a second time this day six months," said—

Mr. Speaker, in moving the amendment of which I have given notice, I shall have to ask something more than the usual indulgence of the House. The House knows that it is not an easy or an agreeable task to follow in debate my right honourable friend who has just sat down (Mr. Gladstone). During my long experience in this House it has never hitherto been my painful lot to have to do so. I have very frequently very far from envied those who had to take that part, and I feel now more convinced than I have ever done before that this can never be an easy task, and especially I feel it when I have to follow a speech in which argument has been mingled to a considerable extent with statement, and when the provisions of a measure which has now been before us for a month have been, as far as I can understand it, very considerably modified. I shall endeavour to refer to those points by and by; but before I come to the reasons which I shall give for moving the amendment of which I have given notice, I shall detain the House for only a very few moments by some observations with the smallest approach to a controversial character upon my right honourable friend's speech. My right honourable friend said in the early portion of his speech, that he had asked himself the question whether Home Rule was compatible with the unity of the Empire, and he considered that that question had received a final and authoritative answer. And what was that answer? The question was settled in his mind by a speech made on the first day of the session by the honourable member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), who said that all he wanted for Ireland was autonomy, or the management of her own affairs. Now, Sir, is this great question, which has long been perplexing the mind of my right honourable friend, to be solved by a single sentence spoken in debate for a manifest and obvious purpose by the Leader of the Irish National Party, when that sentence is in direct contradiction to almost everything that he and his friends have hitherto said, and to the repeated assurances which they have given us that they were working, and would

work for, and would be satisfied with nothing but complete separation? Did the honourable member for Cork ever use the words "severance of the last link," or "complete independence," or did he ever say that no bounds were to be set to the aspirations of the Irish nation? I have not got the honourable member's speeches here; but I ask every one who has studied those speeches, whether the honourable member has ever stopped short of advocating for Ireland complete independence—(Several honourable members: Legislative Independence)—and its restoration to a place among the nations of Europe. Well, Sir, I must say that I think that the answer which my right honourable friend has obtained to his doubts upon the subject of the compatibility of Home Rule with a united Empire is an unsatisfactory and an incomplete one. My right honourable friend has said that the Government are charged with experimenting upon this great question; and the definition he gave of experimenting in politics was that of treating grave questions without grave causes. I do not deny that there may be grave causes, and that this is a grave question; but I should rather be inclined to define experimenting in politics as treating grave questions for grave causes, but without grave and mature consideration. Whatever may be the consideration which my right honourable friend may have given himself to this policy and his measure, it is certain that the country and its representatives have had no sufficient opportunity of forming their judgment or giving their decision upon it. And it is also equally notorious that, with very few exceptions, the colleagues of my right honourable friend, up to the moment of their joining the present Government, had formed opinions and expressed opinions upon the question of Ireland, I will not say diametrically opposed to, but certainly very little in harmony with, the policy of the Prime Minister. Sir, I do not know why my right honourable friend should be disturbed at his policy being termed an experiment. That, in my opinion, is not the worst that can be said about it, for whether it be good, or whether it be bad, it must, at all events, be admitted that it is a novel experiment; for never, I believe, in the history of the world—certainly never in our own history—has the attempt been made to carry on the government of a country upon any such system as that which is now proposed for Ireland. I am not going into details;

I went into them at too great a length the other night; but I venture to say there is no precedent for a great part of this scheme, or the policy which is the foundation of it. It is, as I have before said, concocted from various precedents and examples; but there is no precedent which bears, with an approach to accuracy, upon the case that is before us. I say, whether it be good or bad, this is a policy which can be nothing but an experiment, and can only be ultimately judged by its results. Sir, I was astonished to hear my right honourable friend throw some ridicule upon the policy which has been pursued in past times by Governments of which he has himself been a member—I think he was a member—but at all events by Ministers for whom he entertained a high respect. That policy he designated as the policy of "judicious mixture." He stated several cases in which a measure of a conciliatory character had been accompanied by a measure of coercion, or in which a measure of coercion had been accompanied or followed by a measure of conciliation. I do not think that any Minister or any Government ever admitted that these measures either of repression or of conciliation were proposed on any principle of judicious mixture. Each of those measures was proposed because the Government thought it a measure of justice or a measure of necessity. Catholic emancipation, my right honourable friend is fond of reminding us, was not conceded as a measure of justice, but it was conceded under the threat of civil war. But the other reforms to which he has referred to-night, and especially those which he carried himself, the Disestablishment of the Irish Church and the two Land Acts, were measures which we had always thought were inspired by a desire to do justice to the people of Ireland, and were not administered on any principle of counterpoise or judicious mixture. On the other hand, if there have been measures of repression, they have been proposed from time to time by former Ministers and by my right honourable friend himself, because they believed that they were measures of absolute necessity, which did not alter the spirit, the intention, or the scope of the law, and which were only necessary to enable the ordinary law to be put into execution. As on a former occasion, my right honourable friend has denounced the Union between Great Britain and Ireland and the means by which it was accomplished. None of us, that I am aware, approve

of those means. I have before admitted that I think it probable that the carrying of that measure at that time was premature. But will anyone—will my right honourable friend himself—say that he believes the constitution of 1782 and the relation between Ireland and Great Britain which existed in 1800, could have been a constant permanent constitution, or could have been a permanent relation? Will he deny that it was certain that long before this time that constitution must have been modified either in the direction of a more complete separation between the two countries or in the direction of some such Legislative Union as was effected in 1800? My right honourable friend spoke of the statesmen of the nineteenth century who are quoted as having all been opposed to the Repeal of the Union; but he was compelled to admit that one of the most illustrious of the Whig statesmen to whom he alludes was Lord Grey, and Lord Grey, who had been a great opponent of the Union, lived to be one of the strongest advocates of the Union, and one of the strongest opponents of Repeal. My right honourable friend says that those statesmen who thus supported the Union never had before them a state of facts similar to that with which we have to deal. I gather that he refers to the circumstance that until now there has never been an explicit Parliamentary declaration that the people of Ireland were in favour of Repeal or in favour of Home Rule. But, Sir, I believe from all I can read, that the agitation of Mr. O'Connell was one which, although it did not attain to such large Parliamentary proportions, attained to at least as large national proportions as the present agitation has ever done; that it was supported with as much enthusiasm by at least as large a proportion of the people of Ireland. And, undoubtedly, that agitation enlisted upon its side a far larger and a more varied representation of all classes in Ireland than the Home Rule movement of later years has done. My right honourable friend, in the eloquent peroration with which he closed his speech, said that I have taken a great responsibility upon myself in having taken so prominent a part in opposition to this measure; and he taunted the right honourable gentleman opposite with having allowed us upon this side of the House to do most of the work in opposition to this Bill. I have explained on a former occasion why my friends and I have taken this course.

We know that this measure cannot be defeated merely by the opposition of the Conservative Party. We believe that this Bill is a mischievous measure. We believe that it is not one which will heal the feud, the long standing feud, between Great Britain and Ireland. We believe it does not satisfy any of the essential conditions which have been laid down by my right honourable friend himself. We believe it is not a final settlement of the question. We believe there is nothing in this measure which specially commends it, or ought to commend it, to those who profess Liberal principles; and, holding these opinions, we, who have the misfortune to differ from my right honourable friend, and from the great bulk of the Liberal Party which he leads, have thought it necessary not to conceal our opinions, not to take a passive or a neutral part, but to take that part which alone could give effect to the convictions which we entertain, and which alone, in our judgment, can result in the defeat of this measure, which we believe to be injurious to the best interests of the nation. My right honourable friend says that we have taken a great responsibility; and he calls upon me, now and at once, and in answer to his invitation, to state what is my policy for Ireland. Sir, I can recollect no instance in the long and honourable political career of my right honourable friend himself in which he has taken the course he now calls upon me to take. It has been, I conceive, the duty of my right honourable friend on various occasions to oppose measures which he thought bad; but I do not recollect any occasion on which my right honourable friend in Opposition has unfolded a policy which he was going to propose as soon as those measures were rejected. All I can say is that I retract nothing of those passages in my speeches, which my right honourable friend has done me the honour to quote to-night. It is all very well to pass measures for the reconstruction of the Irish Government. Before Liberal statesmen embraced the doctrine of Home Rule we heard a great deal about the necessity for a reform and decentralisation of the administration. Is my right honourable friend prepared to say that the existing system of Government in Ireland—the system popularly known as Dublin Castle, is the best system which can be devised concurrently with the Legislative Union between the two countries? Although I am not prepared to say in what direction, and in what manner, that system can be at once

revised, I do believe that there are many reforms which can be made in that highly centralised, but yet somewhat inefficient, system of Government which has been for a long time past the object of the opprobrium, not only of honourable members calling themselves representatives of national feeling, but of many representing other shades of political opinion. Sir, I would reply to my right honourable friend as my right honourable friend the member for Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) replied to him on a former occasion—it is not possible for any man now standing here to say what measures he is going to apply to Ireland after this Bill has been thrown out. Why, Sir, it depends, as my right honourable friend said, upon the course taken by the Irish people and the leaders of the Irish people. We have a right to assume—we will assume until we are forced to assume the contrary—that the agitation in Ireland will be conducted by Parliamentary methods and Constitutional means; and, if that be so, I do not see why an attempt should not be made at the gradual process of extension of local self-government in Ireland to which I referred in my speech at Belfast, and which I still believe to be sound, and a more statesmanlike method of proceeding than to attempt to confer on Ireland a cut and dried Constitution, separating and cutting off Ireland completely from all political connection with the United Kingdom of England and Scotland. Before I leave that point, there is only one observation I must make. My right honourable friend referred to my speech at Belfast as if I had indicated my willingness ultimately to grant to Ireland as large a measure of decentralisation as is embodied in this Bill. I spoke simply and exclusively of those subjects which we understand in England and Scotland as included in the term local self-government; but there is nothing I said in that speech, or in any other speech, which ever indicated the slightest intention or willingness on my part to place the responsibility for the administration of the law relating to life and liberty and property entirely in the hands of the representatives of the Irish people, and to separate from that responsibility altogether the Parliament and Government of this country. Now, Sir, after the speech of my right honourable friend, and after the declaration which was published by him a short time ago, I think we are entitled to ask whether, in voting on the second reading of this Bill, we are now asked to vote for a measure

which it is intended to pass into law, or for an abstract resolution. We were told the other day, and we have been told in similar terms to-night, that we are not now to busy ourselves with details and particulars; that their time will come; and that all we have to do now is to say that we will establish in Ireland a Legislative Body for the control of Irish affairs. Well, surely, if we are not to discuss details and particulars, if we are not to be allowed to discuss a plan proposed by the Government, for which the Government intend to take the responsibility, and to which they mean to adhere, how is it possible that we can give an answer to the question whether we are prepared to establish in Ireland a Legislative Body for the management of Irish affairs? That was formerly the view of my right honourable friend himself. In 1874—well, my right honourable friend has told us to-night that the first Home Rule movement took place in 1871, and he has quoted a speech made in that year. My right honourable friend has, therefore, had time to give some attention to this subject. In 1874, Mr. Butt moved an amendment to the Address raising the question of Home Rule, and my right honourable friend himself replied. He said, if a Home Rule plan was proposed—

We shall first inquire whether it be intelligible before we inquire whether it be expedient.

He further said—

It is a dangerous and tricky system for Parliament to adopt—to encounter national dissatisfaction, if it really exists, with an assurance which may mean anything or nothing—which may, perhaps, conciliate the feeling of the people of Ireland for the moment and attract a passing breath of popularity, but which, when the day of trial comes, may be found entirely to fail. It is a method of proceeding which, whatever party may be in power, or whatever measures may be adopted, I trust this House will never condescend to adopt.

Well, Sir, when my right honourable friend used those words, was it his intention that we were absolutely to exclude from our minds, in discussing Mr. Butt's amendment, all details and particulars? How is it possible that we can discuss at length a plan, and say whether it is a good or a bad plan, unless we are allowed to discuss details and particulars, and unless we have some knowledge as to which of those details and particulars represent the fixed and settled opinion and judgment of the Government—to which they intend to adhere, and which are not to be left to the hazard of discussion in

Committee? My right honourable friend said the Committee stage of this Bill is not to be anticipated. I maintain that the essence of this question—whether it is wise or politic to grant a Legislative Body to Ireland—lies in these details; and that unless we can see beforehand a good, intelligible, and satisfactory plan, no man among us will be entitled to say "aye" to the motion for the second reading of this Bill. Well, Sir, my right honourable friend used much language of the same kind on the introduction of this Bill. He said he wanted no longer that we "should fence and skirmish with this question," but that we should "come to close quarters." But how are we to come to close quarters with this question unless we are allowed to discuss the details and particulars, and to know what are the main points of the plan of the Government to which they intend to adhere, and which are not subject to alteration in Committee? My right honourable friend said a good deal to-night upon the question of the retention of the Irish representation in this House. He has hinted—I cannot say I entirely understand his proposal—he has hinted at, I believe, the outlines of certain proposals which the Government themselves intend to make. But, as I understood, the whole question of the retention of Irish representation in this House, is one which is open to consideration in Committee. Well, now, let me point out one or two of the consequences which rest upon the decision to which the House may come upon this point of detail, as it was described the other day by my right honourable friend. If the Irish members are to be absolutely excluded from this House, it follows as a necessary consequence that a large measure of legislative independence must be conceded to the Irish Legislative Body and to the Irish Government. There must be in Ireland some kind of representative government, and there must be in Ireland some power of legislation, and if the Irish members are to be excluded from this House, it is clear that we cannot legislate for them here. Therefore, the necessary alternative is that we should allow them to legislate for themselves. But if this detail be settled the other way, if it be ultimately settled that the Irish representation is to be retained in this House, then there no longer arises this imminent necessity that the Irish Parliament should have complete power of legislation over every Irish matter. On the contrary, there arises a very strong presumption the

other way; because if the Irish Members are present in this House—whether they come to discuss finance or anything else—I maintain that it will be impossible that Irish questions should be excluded from discussion in this House; and thus two influences, acting possibly in opposite and contrary ways, would be brought to bear on the Irish Government, and pressure might be applied to the Lord-Lieutenant, and through him, to the Irish Government, by a majority in this House, which was altogether opposed in political opinions to the majority of the Irish Legislature, to which the Irish Government would be responsible. Therefore, I say, it is of first and cardinal importance that we should know, before we decide this question, whether Ireland is to have a Legislature competent to deal with all Irish matters; whether it is or is not proposed that Ireland is to retain a permanent, a temporary, a complete, or a limited representation within the walls of this House. We know very well, Sir, what are the causes which have induced the Government to give their benevolent consideration to the proposal that the Irish representation in this House should be maintained. We know that my right honourable friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) formulated his demands on this subject in a somewhat imperative fashion. We know that the fate of this Bill may not improbably depend upon the decision to which my right honourable friend may come. Well, Sir, I do not know, I am not able to say, what effect upon my right honourable friend's opinion the proposals announced to-night by Her Majesty's Government may have. I should doubt whether they would be such as to satisfy his requirements, or to conciliate his opposition. What has been the main ground, as I understand it, of my right honourable friend's demand that the Irish representation in this House should be retained? Why, because their exclusion was the clear, the palpable, the unanswerable proof, the outward and visible sign of the complete separation which is intended by this measure between Great Britain and Ireland. I do not understand my right honourable friend to have made this demand as a complete and final satisfaction to all the alterations which he would require in this measure. He has made it as the indispensable preliminary for the further alterations which he thinks scarcely less necessary. He has told us what are the modifications which he thinks are required. He

has told us that he would like to see a separate legislative body, or Provincial Council, or whatever it may be called, granted to Ulster. He has told us that he would wish to see the complete control over taxation retained in the hands of the Imperial Parliament; and he has told us that he would wish to see all the arrangements about the first and second orders and the property qualification removed from the Irish legislative body. These are all necessary alterations which he considers would logically follow upon the retention of the Irish representation in Parliament. I am not sure whether in any case it would have been admitted that those alterations would logically have followed from these concessions; but I feel tolerably certain that no such alteration will follow from the extremely limited concession which my right honourable friend has made to-night to the demands which have been put forward by my right honourable friend the member for West Birmingham. The fact, as I understand it, is this—that although my right honourable friend the member for West Birmingham has spoken of a federal arrangement, he has not departed in principle, or departed very far, from his original proposal of granting to Ireland a great municipality for the management of certain strictly specified objects, strictly limited and controlled by Parliament, and acting in subordination to, and under the control of, Parliament, and of a Government responsible to Parliament. That, Sir, I understand to be the form which my right honourable friend would wish to give to this Bill. I cannot say that I have heard one word to-night from my right honourable friend at the head of the Government which shows that he is in the slightest degree inclined to make any concessions to my right honourable friend, or to those who agree with him, in this direction; and although he intends, for certain specified exceptional and rare purposes, that Irish representatives may return to this House, yet this complete and virtual separation of the two Legislatures and of the two Governments is to be as complete, if not even more complete, than when the Bill was originally introduced. It seems to me, if I rightly understand something that fell from my right honourable friend to-night, that one of the new proposals goes far towards making the Irish legislative assembly a co-ordinate assembly with the British Legislature. I understand that there is to be something in the nature of a

Commission which is to report on foreign and other matters; that the two Houses are, through this Commission, to have the power of conferring with each other, and upon an address from the Irish House the Irish members may be invited over here to discuss Imperial matters.

[Mr. GLADSTONE, interrupting, was understood to say that the noble Marquess was referring to an entirely distinct matter.]

Well, Sir, I will not discuss this matter, because I confess that I do not understand fully what the proposal was. I think it is unfortunate that a proposal which seems to me of very considerable importance, and which may have a very considerable effect on the opinions of many honourable members in getting their vote on the second reading of this Bill, should be only before us in the form of a statement by my right honourable friend, and that we should not have, and I suppose we cannot have, before the second reading of the Bill, a clear and definite statement in the form of clauses in the Bill to tell us what are these actual proposals now going to be made. I must assume, after what we have heard to-night, that although this Bill is subject to large modifications in committee, it is the intention of the Government that it should remain substantially in the form in which it was introduced. Well, then, perhaps I may say briefly what are some of the principal objections which I entertain to this Bill, and why I cannot give my support to it. In the first place, I should like to say, before I pass away altogether from that point, that it seems to me altogether erroneous to say, as my right honourable friend said in his manifesto the other day, and I think he repeated it to-night, that the sole principle which is contained in this Bill is the concession of autonomy to Ireland. Sir, I find in this measure other principles, or, at all events, provisions involving principles, which are of far greater importance than are contained in a dozen ordinary Bills. In the first place, there is an alteration in the constitution of Parliament. For all practical purposes, notwithstanding what we have been told to-day, the Imperial Parliament is henceforward to be representative of two kingdoms instead of three. That is a principle of some importance. This Bill, for the first time, limits the authority of Parliament. Hitherto Parliament has been omnipotent—perhaps the expression is somewhat too

wide—but we have been accustomed to consider Parliament omnipotent; and I believe, subject to the laws of nature and of its own will, there has, up to the present time, been no limitation upon the authority of Parliament. But this Bill, for the first time, will limit the authority of Parliament. The thirty-seventh clause in the Bill, under the guise of saving the legislative power and authority of Parliament, virtually parts with a part of the power now possessed by Parliament. That clause says that the powers of Parliament shall be preserved, notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, in relation to all matters with which it is not competent for the Irish Parliament to deal. Therefore, inferentially, that clause lays down that with matters with which it is competent for the Irish Legislature to deal, it shall no longer be competent for the Imperial Parliament to deal. That is a new principle of some importance, and not a detail. Then, again, for the first time, a judicial authority is set up which will have power to take cognisance of, and pronounce an opinion on, the limits of Parliamentary authority. Constitutional questions are to be referred to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The Lord-Lieutenant or the Secretary of State may refer such questions to the Privy Council. The Privy Council is to decide whether such a question is or is not within the competence of the Irish legislative body; and if it decides that it is so competent it will, by the same decision, decide that it is not constitutionally within the competence of the Imperial Parliament. Sir, I say that these are enormous changes of principle, and changes of principle which may have a more far-reaching effect than even is contemplated by them as they are presented to us in this Bill. I will not attempt, I cannot attempt, to forecast what may be the future influence upon our constitutional notions and constitutional practice of the importation of innovations such as these; but I say, at all events, they are not details; they are principles which the House ought to bear in mind, and ought to have clearly before it, previous to giving its assent to an abstract resolution, affirming in the opinion of my right honourable friend, only the principle that Ireland ought to have some control over its own affairs. I should like to state one or two objections to the Bill. I maintain that the cardinal principle laid down by my right honourable friend—the maintenance of the unity of the

Empire—is not secured by this Bill. I think, Sir, it would be an error to suppose that the unity of the Empire is maintained if it presents a united front in foreign policy, if it is represented by a united Navy and a united Army. As far as external matters go, and as far as our relations with other states and nations are concerned, we may be able to preserve the semblance of unity after this Bill is passed; but as far as our internal position goes, I say that with the passing of this Bill, the unity of the Empire will have disappeared. We may have not only different laws in Ireland from those which prevail in England and Scotland; but laws founded on totally different principles, and administered in a totally different spirit. And I say that this is no extravagant supposition. If the principles recently preached by the Irish Land League and the Irish National League be translated into legislation by the Irish Parliament, and if laws founded on those principles be administered by those who have had control over the National League, then we shall find in Ireland a state of law relating to property, liberty, and security of life, which will be of an altogether different character to that prevailing in this country. Can it be said that the unity of the Empire is maintained when an Englishman, going from England to Ireland, or an Irishman remaining in Ireland, finds himself subject to a code of laws administered in a totally different spirit from that which prevails in the rest of the Empire? And, in my opinion, it would be no exaggeration to suppose that it would be perfectly possible, if this Bill is passed, for an Englishman to emigrate to the United States of America and find himself in a condition of things less altered in all that related to his Government, and to the laws under which he lived, than if he transferred his domicile from England and Scotland to the newly-created Kingdom of Ireland. I maintain that no adequate safeguards have been provided for the minority. That is a point on which my right honourable friend dwelt in his introductory speech. He told us who those were for whom protection was required. These were the Ulster Protestants, the landlords, and the Civil servants. I think the Ulster Protestants have had but cold comfort offered to them. They have been told that various suggestions have been made which shall receive in committee full consideration; but none of which have assumed so practical a shape as to be worthy of

attention, or worthy of adoption, by the Government; and the Ulster Protestants are given to understand that if somebody cannot put these suggestions into a more practical shape than the Government have been able to do, they must be left to take their chance. Then the landlords are to be provided for, if the Land Purchase Bill passes, by being bought out. We have had significant hints regarding the Irish landlords. We have been told that "the sands are running out," and that as yet the Irish landlords have made no sign; and it would seem that unless the Irish landlords can discover some constitutional means by which they are to express their gratitude for being, in the first place, compelled to become exiles from their native country, and, in the second place, compelled to receive only about half the income to which they are now legally entitled—unless they can find some constitutional means of expressing gratitude for these boons, it appears that they also will have to go without any compensation at all. We will assume that the landlords are bought out, and the Civil servants pensioned off. There will still be a large minority behind in Ireland, exclusive altogether of the minority we have in Ulster, who will be rendered the more helpless by the departure of the landlords and of the Civil servants. There will be all those who have done service to these obnoxious classes, who have in times past done what they thought good service, as the right honourable gentleman says, to the maintenance of law and order; men who have acted as jurymen, and have done their duty; men who have acted as independent witnesses; men who, in one capacity or another, have made themselves obnoxious to what will become the dominant power in Ireland; and for this minority, rendered more helpless by the departure of those to whom they would have a right to look for assistance, no protection whatever is provided. I recognise, I admit, that the provisions respecting the constitution of the Irish legislative body were probably devised with the honest intention of giving what protection could be given to this minority. But how have these provisions been received? How many of the members who have intimated their intention to vote for the second reading of this Bill have expressed their intention to abide by such provisions? And if these provisions were passed into law, I must confess that they appear to me, however honestly intended, to be far more

likely to produce a deadlock and confusion in the Irish Parliament and the Irish administration than to answer the purposes for which they were intended—namely, of giving adequate security to the minority. Can we doubt that if there was this deadlock and confusion lasting for a few years an agitation would arise—and probably a successful agitation—for the abolition and removal of these restrictions, and for the abolition of the last provision in this Bill, which is intended for the protection of any Irish minority? My right honourable friend suggested in his manifesto the other day the possible extension of this measure to Scotland, and he spoke of some who viewed this proposal with horror. I do not know whether he referred to anything I said on this subject. I certainly have never said one word to show that I am in the slightest degree disinclined to give a large measure, and a liberal measure, of local self-government to the people of Scotland, if they wish it. What I have endeavoured to point out is this—that if this measure is founded on sound principles, it ought to be one capable of being applied to Scotland. And I have pointed out that if it was proposed to extend this measure to Scotland, the people of Scotland would scout and reject it; and I have attempted to show that it is extremely likely that the Irish people would in a short time be as dissatisfied with the measure, as the Scotch people would be at the very first, and that this measure is not therefore likely to be any final solution. But my right honourable friend says in his manifesto, that if the Scottish question were raised, it would be debated upon its own merits, and without reference to any of the painful considerations which have been dragged into this controversy as regards Ireland. My right honourable friend says—

> If the case of Scotland is discussed, it will be done without the painful and disparaging circumstances of controversy with which we are now threatened in the case of Ireland, whose woeful history for centuries emboldens some of us to treat her as if she had but a limited share in the great inheritance of human right, and none at all in the ordinary privilege of immunity from gross and wholesale insult—emboldens, I say, some of us, but only some of us, and not, I rejoice to think, the nations of Scotland or of England.

I do not know who "some of us" are to whom my right honourable friend refers. I suppose he refers to what he termed the representatives of class. I may be included—I probably am included—among those representatives of class whose

evidence is discredited evidence, whose opinion upon this subject is not worth having; but I shall not be debarred, nevertheless, from expressing my opinion of the character, the political antecedents, and the political record of the men who we are now told are the representatives of the vast majority of the people of Ireland, and to whose hands will be entrusted, if this Bill should pass, the future destinies of Ireland. I shall call as a witness no discredited representative of class; but I will call as a witness my right honourable friend himself, and I shall quote his words, used five years ago, in 1881, when my right honourable friend was then, as now, the leader of the "upright sense of the nation." What was the description which he gave then of the political party which we are now told by him is representative of the great majority of the people of Ireland? The passage to which I refer has been often quoted; but as it is important in this connection, I will read it to the House. My right honourable friend, speaking at Leeds in 1881, said—

For nearly the first time in the history of Christendom a body—a small body—of men has arisen who are not ashamed to preach in Ireland the doctrines of public plunder. I make that charge advisedly in the situation which I hold, and I shall ask you to judge with me whether it is not wrung from me by demonstrative evidence and by the hard necessity of the case.

My right honourable friend then contrasted the policy and the principles of the honourable member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) with those of Mr. O'Connell, and drew a distinction between them on five points. He said—

Mr. O'Connell professed his unconditional and unswerving loyalty to the Crown of England. Mr. Parnell says that if the Crown of England is to be the link between the two countries, it must be the only link; but whether it is to be the link at all—I am not now quoting his words—is a matter on which, I believe, he has given no opinion whatever. O'Connell desired friendly relations with the people of this country—cordial and hearty friendship. What does Mr. Parnell desire? He says the Irish people must make manufactures of their own in order that they may buy nothing in England. . . . . Friendship with England was the motto of O'Connell, who on every occasion declared his respect for property, and, as far as I know, he consistently maintained it; but what says Mr. Parnell upon that subject? . . . . . Now that the Land Act has passed, and now that he is afraid lest the people of England, by their long-continued efforts, should win the hearts of the whole Irish nation, Mr. Parnell has a new and an enlarged gospel of

plunder to proclaim. He says now that whereas the rental of Ireland is £17,000,000 the landlord is entitled to nothing but the original value of the land before the spade was put into it; and that the rental he may justly claim is not £17,000,000, but possibly about £3,000,000. And I ask you, gentlemen, as honest men, not as politicians, not as Liberals, not in any other capacity—I ask you whether it is possible to describe proceedings of that kind in any other words more just or accurate than as the promulgation of the gospel of sheer plunder. The next of the five points was respect for law and human life. On this I think O'Connell was consistent; and I believe he was unimpeachable. Mr. Parnell is somewhat copious in his references to America. He seems to set up America as the true and only friend of Ireland; but in all his references to America he has never found time to utter one word of disapproval or misgiving about what is known as the assassination literature of that country. Not American literature; no, there is not an American who does not scorn it, and spurn it, and loathe it, as you do. But there are, it is sad to say, a knot of Irishmen who are not ashamed to point out in the Press which they maintain how the ships in Her Majesty's Navy ought to be blown into the air to destroy the power of England by secret treachery, and how gentlemen that they are pleased to select ought to be made the object of the knife of the assassin and deprived of life because they do not conform to the new Irish gospel.

Well, Sir, that was the description given five years ago—it may be said a long time ago—of that party, the small party of the honourable member for Cork at that time. I want to know which of the doctrines that were held by the honourable Member for Cork at that time, and which were thus denounced by my right honourable friend have been ever renounced or repudiated by the honourable gentleman or by his party in this House. I do not know that they have been verbally repudiated. I want to know whether there is any visible sign that they have been practically repudiated. Is there any difference—any essential or practical difference—in the methods and procedure of the National League from the methods and procedure of the Land League, which was thus spoken of by my right honourable friend then? As far as I can see, the description given of the policy of that party then is not materially altered in any respect now, except that the description then given was the description of that small party which it might then have been reasonably contended did not represent any large proportion of the Irish people; but it is now a large party, which it is asserted does represent the vast majority of the inhabitants of Ireland. Well, what was the course, what was the advice, what was the policy of my right

honourable friend at that time in reference to that state of circumstances? My right honourable friend said—

> But, if, when we have that short further experience to which I have referred, it shall then appear that there is still to be fought a final conflict in Ireland between law on the one side and sheer lawlessness on the other; if the law purged from defect and from any taint of injustice is still to be repelled and refused, and the first conditions of political society are to be set at nought, then I say, gentlemen, without any hesitation, the resources of civilisation against its enemies are not yet exhausted.

That was the policy which my right honourable friend recommended then, and which I venture to recommend now. If this war—this final conflict between law on the one side and sheer lawlessness on the other—is to continue, that is the policy which I venture to recommend still, but for recommending which I and my friends are called the representatives of class. I forget what the other epithet which my right honourable friend applied was. (An honourable Member: Dependents.) But these, we are told, are now the principles held by the representatives of class. Well, Sir, my right honourable friend concluded that speech by saying—

> I, for one, in that state of facts relying upon my fellow-countrymen in these three nations associated together, have not a doubt of the result.

I wish that I could say the same now. I wish there was not a doubt as to the result of the policy which my right honourable friend then recommended. But, Sir, I say that the circumstances which were then described by my right honourable friend are not materially or substantially altered; and, therefore, in my opinion, the policy my right honourable friend then recommended, founded on that state of facts, ought not to be substantially altered either. I see no reason, simply because the party professing those principles has acquired greater strength and possibly a greater claim to represent a large number of the people of Ireland—I see no reason why we are to retire from that which has been called by my right honourable friend a conflict between law on the one side and sheer lawlessness on the other, and why we are to sacrifice, without any further struggle, the principles upon which, in the opinion of my right honourable friend at that time, the structure and basis of society reposed. Sir, it is for these

reasons, only a few of which I have thus imperfectly been permitted to give to the House, that I, believing that this measure is fraught with mischief and disaster both to this country and to Ireland, now beg to move, as an amendment to the motion which you have put from the chair, that this Bill be read a second time this day six months.

JOSEPH ARCH

JOSEPH ARCH learned to speak in the fields, where he worked, and in Methodist Chapels, where he preached. He acquired a wonderful power of carrying his hearers away by a mixture of familiarity and force which swayed audiences composed of men with like habits and experience to his own. In this manner he became an oracle among them, and founded the Agricultural Labourers' Union. This, his first speech in the House of Commons, was made in support of a policy which he had been long preaching: the public provision of land at a reasonable price for allotments to agricultural labourers. Home Rule for Ireland was absorbing so much attention at the time that the subject of allotments fell into the background. It has, however, been often more or less prominent since, and this particular speech is interesting from a political as well as from a personal point of view. It was delivered during the debate on the Address at the opening of Parliament in January, 1886, the debate which resulted in the defeat of Lord Salisbury's Government. It is a very good example of a first attempt in a new sphere by a man who was accustomed to audiences of a very different kind, and for this reason may well find a place in these pages. The House of Commons takes little account of credit gained elsewhere. On the other hand, it is always willing to give any new-comer his chance, and is also curious to observe how a well-known personage will acquit himself. In this case he acquitted himself remarkably well, as the following speech will show.

DEBATE ON THE QUESTION OF ALLOTMENTS, *January* 26, 1886

SIR,—I have no intention of wasting the time of the House with a long speech; but I think I have a just right to address

the House on this subject. I am, as you are aware, the representative of a class whose interest, whose happiness, and whose comfort I believe gentlemen on both sides of the House are anxious to improve. With regard to the allotments question, I can remember when it was one of the most difficult things in the world for a labourer in a village to obtain anything like a decent allotment; but during the past fourteen years I am happy to say that honourable gentlemen—both Liberal and Conservative—have, to some happy extent, seen their way clear to grant and extend these allotments. The right honourable member for Mid-Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin), when speaking last night upon the Amendment of my honourable friend the member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay), said that the small freeholders in Mid-Lincolnshire were in a very destitute condition. I have watched all my life the working of a freehold, and the energy and contentment of a freeholder; and it is quite true that where a man has had a heavy mortgage on his little freehold he has had a difficulty to face. But I have been pleasantly surprised to find on both sides of the House the great anxiety there is now to improve the agricultural labourers' position. Fourteen years ago, when I was asked by my own brethren in the counties if I could institute something to improve their condition, my policy was denounced, my actions were condemned, and not a few labourers were "Boycotted." I know that there are good landlords and bad landlords, and the Amendment of the honourable member for Ipswich (Mr. Jesse Collings), I think, does not in the least interfere with good landlords who are willing to grant land for their labourers; but are there not places in the country where labourers are almost landless? Where have the majority of the unemployed men in our towns to-day come from? They have been divorced from the soil, and they have been driven into our towns. To my mind, the object of the Amendment of the honourable member for Ipswich is not so much to cure agricultural depression as to cure the poverty of agricultural labourers. How can that poverty be arrested if, during certain portions of the year, the working men in our villages are thrown out of employment? My remedy for years has been this—that if you do not require the services of a workman to till the land of the tenant farmer, then, in the name of common justice and humanity, allow him some land to till

for himself. I think the Amendment of the honourable member for Ipswich is quite opportune. When I read the speech of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, which expressed sympathy with the distress that was prevalent not only in trade but in agriculture, I took it certainly to mean this—"You are in a terribly poverty-stricken condition. Your lot in life is hard. You are without employment and without money, and consequently must be without food. I know your lot is hard, but I have no remedy." It seems to me something like this—that supposing as an individual I were suffering intense bodily pain and I sent for a medical adviser, he looks at me, he sees me writhing in agony, and he says—"I have not a single ingredient in my surgery that I could apply to assuage your pain." Would it not be natural enough for me to seek the advice of some more skilled physician? If Her Majesty's Government have no remedy for this distress, then, I think, the country will very soon look out for another physician who has a practical remedy already at hand. The right honourable member for Mid-Lincolnshire blamed the honourable member for Ipswich because he had prescribed no remedy; but I confess that I have not yet found honourable gentlemen on that side of the House prescribing any remedy themselves. If honourable gentlemen on this side of the House have not prescribed the right sort of medicine, the Government at the present time have every opportunity of finding that medicine and relieving the distress. The right honourable gentleman the member for Mid-Lincolnshire said last night that wages had gone down in that county from 18s. to 12s. per week. He expressed great surprise and wonder how these poor people managed to live. Now, I think I shall be quite in place if I ask the right honourable gentleman to try to live upon that wage for three months himself—then he will be able to solve the problem. He further said that, while wages were low, numbers of men were out of employment. Well, if it is difficult for a man with 12s. a week to support himself, his wife, and, perhaps, three or four children, what a sorry plight those men must be in who are out of employment and have no wages at all. Honourable gentlemen have said that about a quarter of an acre is sufficient for a working man in a village. There may be some working men, such as shepherds and carters, who would, perhaps, be contented with a rood of ground;

but I venture to say that a very large number of the labourers in Norfolk—and I am speaking now from my own experience in that county—would only be too glad if they could rent an acre or two at a fair market price. On the other hand, I do not find any human or Divine law which would confine me, as a skilled labourer, to one rood of God's earth. If I have energy, tact, and skill by which I could cultivate my acre or two, and buy my cow into the bargain, I do not see any just reason why my energies should be crippled and my forces held back, and why I should be content, as an agricultural labourer, with a rood of ground and my nose on the grindstone all the days of my life. We want to put an end to pauperism; and I am prepared to say that among my class there are hundreds and thousands of working men who hate pauperism, and who have a perfect horror of the workhouse. But if we are to be cut down to 12s. a week, which the right honourable gentleman acknowledged was a very small wage, and if these men by their energy can supplement these wages by another 10s. or 12s. into the bargain, I want to know why it should not be done, and the pauperism of the country lessened. The right honourable gentleman spoke of men in France having to work very hard, and appearing very old when they were almost young. He said they carried fodder to the cows, and went milking, and the rest of it; but the right honourable gentleman forgot to tell us that they were their own cows. I have seen the women in Somersetshire, Wiltshire, and Dorsetshire milking other people's cows, and having very little of the milk which they drew from them. I cannot understand for the life of me why, if an English workman can, by thrift and industry and care, manage to secure to himself and his family a cow, he should not have the opportunity of doing so. The Amendment of the honourable member for Ipswich means that. We do not ask for borrowed funds, or for the land to be given us, and we have no desire to steal it. What the Amendment asks, and what I ask honourable gentlemen on both sides of the House, is, whether the time has not come when these thousands of industrious and willing workers should no longer be shut out from the soil, and should have an opportunity of obtaining a fair freehold, and producing food for themselves and their families? Why are these men out of work? Is it because the land is so well cultivated that no more of their

labour is required? I travel this country from one end to the other, and I have an idea I know when land is cultivated and when it is not as well as any gentlemen in this House. I say, fearless of contradiction, that there are tens of thousands of acres of land waiting for the hand of the workman; and what this House ought to consider and aim at is to use every legitimate means to bring the land that cries for labour to the labourer as soon as possible. I am addressing in this House large landed proprietors; and will any honourable gentleman attempt for one moment to deny that the best cultivated estate is the best for the landlord? When I look at this question I go almost out of the region of party politics. It is not a landlord's, a tenant farmer's, or a labourer's question; it is the question of the people, and they will very soon make it their question. We are not Socialists—not in the offensive meaning of the word; but to a certain extent we are Socialists, because we are social beings. We like social comforts and social society; but we have a great aversion to social society paid for out of the poor rates. An honourable gentleman said last night that it was beyond the power of the honourable member for North-West Norfolk to raise wages. I thought it was equally impossible for landlords in this country to force up rent. We have always been told that the price of labour would be regulated by what it is worth in the market. That is just what land has got to be. My idea of justice in land is this—that if I have to sell as a tenant farmer my produce extremely cheap, then I say the rent of my land should be extremely cheap. But the time has come for, and this Parliament has been elected very largely to carry out, some just and wise measure, not only for the improvement of the tenant farmers—and Heaven knows they want something, some of them—but for the benefit of the labourers and for the benefit of the country. When I look around on this side of the House I see several honourable gentlemen—a fair number of Liberal members—who have been returned by the votes very largely of the agricultural labourers. They know that during the contests in various divisions the labourers expressed a very great desire for land to cultivate for themselves. They naturally concurred with that idea; but I have never heard any Liberal candidate promise the labourers three acres and a cow. For myself, I never made such a vain promise.

Something which dropped from the right honourable and learned Lord Advocate last night somewhat grieved me. When he was speaking of the labourers of Scotland I think he called them hinds. I should like to inform the right honourable and learned gentleman that though our lot in life has been one of poverty, though we were born in humble cottages, at the same time we look upon ourselves as men. I think honourable gentlemen on the other side of the House would feel very much annoyed if we were to call them aristocratic goats. The labourers of this country know they are men. They have largely contributed to the constitution of this House; and I hope it will be able to show honestly and fairly to the labourers who have sent us here that, at least, we did our best to redress their grievances, to dry their tears, to wipe away their sorrows, and to place them in the position of free men.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S speech on the first reading of the Home Rule Bill in 1886 is a good specimen of his clear and forcible style. It was made soon after his own resignation, and it defines his personal attitude towards Home Rule. He had joined Mr. Gladstone's Government in the hope and belief that a policy of inquiry would lead to the adoption of a scheme which he could support. Being disappointed in that expectation, he left the Cabinet, and became one of Mr. Gladstone's most formidable antagonists. Mr. Chamberlain represents in a striking degree the man of business in politics. In the House of Commons, and on the platform, he has spoken with a mastery of detail which came from the habit of constantly dealing with facts and figures. But he has also a persuasive, incisive manner of presenting his arguments, and leading up to his conclusions, which would alone entitle him to a place among distinguished speakers. He has seldom confined himself, even in Opposition, to mere criticism. His ingenuity has almost always been equal to devising alternatives, and contrasting them with the proposals which he attacked. The speech which follows illustrates his essential qualities as a debater more clearly than some of his more ambitious efforts, and has, therefore, been selected for insertion here. The driving force of his mind, which has really marked him out from the run of merely skilful debaters, and given him the influence he possessed, is easily discernible in these resonant, vibrating periods.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL

April 9, 1886

SIR, in interposing at this stage of the debate I have to throw myself upon the indulgence of the House. I have risen not

so much for the purpose of entering upon any detailed discussion of the magnificent speech which was delivered by my right honourable friend the Prime Minister last night, as to make an explanation to the House of the causes which led to my recent resignation. I believe that it is the invariable practice of Ministers retiring from a Cabinet to seek the earliest opportunity of explaining their position to the House; and if in my case this explanation has necessarily been delayed, that is owing to circumstances which the House will thoroughly appreciate. I could not, of course, without impropriety—it would have been indecent for me to have done anything to anticipate the explanation of my right honourable friend or to force his hand; and, accordingly, it is only now that I have the permission of Her Majesty to state publicly the circumstances and the reasons which have led to the course which I have taken. If, in doing this, I have to digress a little from the strict course of the debate, I hope that the House will be willing to make allowances for the peculiar circumstances in which I stand. It is now nearly a month since my right honourable friend the member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) and myself tendered our resignations, and it is nearly a fortnight since they were finally accepted. In the interval, and while our mouths were closed, rumour has been busy with our reputations and motives, and rumour has not always been very truthful, and certainly it has not been very friendly. I find that some persons, whose frame of mind it is very difficult for me to appreciate, seem to take a pleasure in imputing the basest motives for the public actions of men with whom they happen to differ, and suggest that I only joined the Government with a preconceived determination to leave it at the first opportunity. The statement is not only utterly untrue, but it is ridiculous. (Mr. Gladstone: Hear, hear.) I will say to the House that no act of my public life has been so painful as the resignation which I recently tendered to my right honourable friend. I am told that by taking that step I have wrecked my political prospects, and destroyed altogether all hope of future usefulness. Well, Sir, that is a prospect which it is possible for me to contemplate with equanimity; but it is more difficult to reconcile myself to a separation from one whom I have followed and honoured for so many years, and to leave the personal friends and

political associates with whom, I believe, I have no other cause of difference whatever. I have found it hard to give up an opportunity which I thought I had in my grasp, to do something to put forward legislation in which I take a great and overwhelming interest. These considerations weighed with me, and I can assure the House that I have found it a more difficult task to leave a Government than to enter one. There is only one other remark which I wish to make by way of preface. I admit, Sir, that if any difference of opinion has arisen between myself and my right honourable friend, with his unrivalled experience, with his vast knowledge of public affairs, and with his loving, and tried devotion to the public service, the natural presumption is that he is right and that I am wrong. It is one to which I have yielded my own judgment on many occasions; but in the present instance the issue before us is one of such vital importance, and a mistake, if we make one, is so fatal and so irrevocable that it seems to me to be the duty of every man, however humble, to bring an independent judgment to its consideration; and everything—private feeling, personal friendship, political ambition, and the cherished objects of a public life—all these must be put aside in view of circumstances which are still higher and more important. Since I have been in public affairs I have called myself, I think not altogether without reason, a Radical. But that title has never prevented me from giving great consideration to Imperial interests. I have cared for the honour and the influence and the integrity of the Empire, and it is because I believe these things are now in danger that I have felt myself called upon to make the greatest sacrifice that any public man can be expected to make. It will be in the recollection of the House that the late Government were defeated on the 26th of January, on a motion which was made by my friend, Mr. Jesse Collings, and which raised what has sometimes been called the "unauthorised programme," although I never admitted the justice of that description. But it will be admitted that by that Resolution the House did undoubtedly pledge itself generally to the policy with which I happened to be conspicuously identified during the Autumn campaign; and, accordingly, when my right honourable friend, on the 30th of January, did me the honour to invite me to become a Member of the Government, I was able to tell him that

I would allow no personal considerations whatever to stand in the way of my giving him any support I could possibly bring to him; but I felt it necessary to add that the reports that were current as to his intentions with regard to Ireland made me somewhat doubtful whether I could possibly be of service. My right honourable friend was good enough to tell me that he had not up to that day formed any definite plan; that he had only committed himself to inquiry; and that if I joined him I should be perfectly free to judge and to decide upon anything which would be submitted to the Cabinet. My right honourable friend said that he adhered to his previous public utterances, and all he asked his colleagues was to join with him in an inquiry and examination as to how far it was or was not practicable to meet the wishes of the great proportion of the Irish people, as expressed by the return of a large majority of representatives to Parliament, to form something in the nature of a legislative body sitting in Dublin. My right honourable friend added that any possible concession in this direction would be accompanied by full and ample guarantees for the security and integrity of the Empire, for the protection of minorities of all classes of the community, and for the protection of the just interests of the Three Kingdoms. I told my right honourable friend that this was an inquiry of which I approved, and which, indeed, I thought had become indispensable. I told him that I thought the conditions which he had fixed to any possible concession were just, reasonable, and adequate conditions; but I went on to say that I thought it was honest to state that, as far as I was able to make up my mind, or to form any kind of judgment, I did not believe that he would find it possible to conciliate these conditions and limitations with the establishment of a separate and practically independent Parliament in Dublin. My right honourable friend did not think that that opinion so expressed by me ought to be a bar to my joining his Government. I asked his leave to put my views in writing, and, if the House will permit me, I will read the letter in which I accepted office. It is as follows—

40, PRINCE'S GARDENS, S.W.,
January 30, 1886.

MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

I have availed myself of the opportunity you have kindly afforded me to consider further your offer of a seat in your Government. I

recognise the justice of your view that the question of Ireland is paramount to all others, and must first engage your attention. The statement of your intention to examine whether it is practicable to comply with the wishes of the majority of the Irish people, as testified by the return of eighty-five representatives of the Nationalist Party, does not go beyond your previous public declarations, while the conditions which you attach to the possibility of such compliance seem to me adequate, and are also in accordance with your repeated public utterances. But I have already thought it due to you to say that, according to my present judgment, it will not be found possible to conciliate those conditions with the establishment of a National Legislative Body sitting in Dublin; and I have explained my own preference for an attempt to come to terms with the Irish members on the basis of a more limited scheme of Local Government, coupled with proposals for a settlement of the land, and, perhaps, also, of the Education Question. You have been kind enough, after hearing these opinions, to repeat your request that I should join your Government, and you have explained that, in this case, I shall retain 'unlimited liberty of judgment and rejection' on any scheme that may ultimately be proposed, and that the full consideration of such minor proposals as I have referred to as an alternative to any larger arrangement will not be excluded by you. On the other hand, I have no difficulty in assuring you of my readiness to give an unprejudiced examination to any more extensive proposals that may be made, with an anxious desire that the result may be more favourable than I am at present able to anticipate. In the circumstances, and with the most earnest hope that I may be able in any way to assist you in your difficult work, I beg to accept the offer you have made to submit my name to Her Majesty for a post in the new Government.

I am, my dear Mr. Gladstone,

Yours sincerely,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Well, Sir, I have been blamed, like my right honourable friend the member for the Border Burghs, for joining the Government at all; but I think a moment's reflection will show that any accusation of this kind, at all events, based upon my action would be entirely unreasonable. I have never been opposed to Home Rule, as I have explained, and as I have always understood, the words, and as my right honourable friend the Prime Minister has on many public occasions defined it. The definitions of my right honourable friend, those which I have accepted, are these—that he has been willing as I have been willing, to give to Ireland the largest possible extension of local government consistent with the integrity of the Empire and the supremacy of Parliament; and, further, my right honourable friend has always declared he would never offer

to Ireland anything in the direction of Home Rule which he was not prepared to offer with an equal hand to Scotland and other parts of the United Kingdom. If, now, Sir, to my deep regret and with the greatest possible reluctance, I have felt compelled to sever myself from the Government of my right honourable friend, it is because in my heart and conscience I do not think the scheme which he explained to the House last night does maintain the limitations which he has always declared himself determined to preserve. I confess, if I had refused at this time to join the Government to undertake an inquiry so limited, and under these conditions, then I think there would have been some reason to say that I was animated by a disloyal feeling towards my Leader, or that I was careless of the interests of the Party with which I am connected. Now, Sir, I admit that in all probability the misunderstanding was entirely my own fault. I certainly assumed that the inquiry my right honourable friend spoke of would be undertaken by him in concert with his colleagues. I imagined that it was intended to proceed with the examination step by step in the Cabinet, and that after full consultation we were all to be called upon to endeavour to build up some scheme which would fulfil the intentions of the Prime Minister. But, as I say, I must have misunderstood my right honourable friend in this particular, because it was not until the 13th of March that this matter was mentioned for the first time in the Cabinet. It was then brought forward in connection with the scheme for land purchase which had been circulated to members of the Cabinet the day before. The scheme contained in this paper was certainly to me a very startling proposal, involving the issue of £120,000,000 Consols—

MR. GLADSTONE: I must interrupt my right honourable friend. I beg to observe that the permission which I obtained from Her Majesty on his behalf had no relation whatever to any particulars of any scheme with regard to the sale or purchase of land to be submitted to the House of Commons. I did not ask Her Majesty for any permission for anyone to speak upon a subject on which a final decision of the Cabinet had not been taken, and which had not been publicly explained to Parliament. I may add that any attempt, or any partial attempt, to enter upon any supposed particulars of that scheme would lead to radical misunderstanding.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: I cannot say, Sir, how much I regret the misunderstanding which has arisen between my right honourable friend and myself. I need not say to the House that if I had had the slightest conception that my right honourable friend had intended to limit in the way he now says my explanation to the House, either I would have withheld that explanation altogether until a more fitting opportunity, or, at least, I would not, in the slightest degree, have gone from any arrangement that had been come to. I am very sorry that I have not with me my correspondence with my right honourable friend to obtain for me permission from Her Majesty to explain the causes which had led to my resignation. Why, Sir, I did not resign upon the scheme of Home Rule alone. I tendered my resignation after this scheme of land purchase had been produced, and in consequence of the production of that scheme of land purchase. How can I explain the reason of my resignation to the House if my hands are tied behind me? But, Sir, I go further than that. My right honourable friend, in reply to my request that I might have permission to explain the cause of my resignation, wrote to me a letter to the effect that he had obtained the permission of Her Majesty that I might state the reasons—I forget the exact words, but I think he will agree that I am giving the sense—which led to my resignation "in connection with the scheme for the Government of Ireland." (Mr. Gladstone: Hear, hear.) I thought that that was a doubtful expression. I was afraid that it might mean some kind of limitation. What did I do? I wrote to my right honourable friend to state to him that I proposed to read to the House of Commons a letter I had written after the Cabinet meeting at which the land scheme was discussed, and in which I stated my reasons for objecting to the land scheme, and my right honourable friend gave me his permission, and said: "By all means."

MR. GLADSTONE: Mr. Speaker, from my right honourable friend I understood that he, having in his hands the note which I had written to him as to the permission which I had obtained from Her Majesty, proposed to read all the letters which he had written in relation to the subject-matter of that note. I replied to my right honourable friend that in my opinion he was perfectly justified in exercising his own discretion upon that subject. That is perfectly true, and I do

not think anything beyond that would be found to have been included in the scope of the note from me to which my right honourable friend has referred, but which, unfortunately, he has not got with him.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: Sir, I certainly have not got the correspondence in my possession; but I could not have conceived that this most painful altercation—difference of opinion—could possibly have arisen. I am sorry to differ from my right honourable friend. I think his view is mistaken. What I asked his permission to read—I am sure he will find it in my letter—was my letter of March 15, 1886. His permission to me was to read that letter. I beg to ask my right honourable friend whether he wishes to withdraw that permission now.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I cannot at this moment recollect what letter it was which my right honourable friend wrote to me on the 15th of March. I have stated, I think, with perfect exactitude the substance of my statement to him.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: I must say my right honourable friend puts me in a most difficult position. I have to decide at a moment's notice, with the greatest respect for my right honourable friend, what course I shall pursue. I have again to repeat that in the letter which I wrote to my right honourable friend, I gave him the dates of all the letters and documents which I proposed to read. I proposed to read certain letters of his, and I asked whether he had any objection to my reading them. In his reply he said he thought it was unnecessary and undesirable, and he also objected to my reading another document which I had mentioned. I replied to him that I should certainly be guided by his wishes, and I should content myself with reading my own letters, and should not read anything I received from him. My right honourable friend says he is not aware of the contents of one of those letters, the most important, the one I described to him in my letters as dated March 15th, and as containing my reasons for my resignation. He says he is not aware of the contents of that letter. I cannot say whether my right honourable friend thinks I am entitled to read it or not. If my right honourable friend cannot give me permission to read that letter I shall not press it.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I have stated the full extent of the

permission received from Her Majesty by me on behalf of my right honourable friend. It is not in my power to extend that permission; and I think it would be entirely contrary, alike to principle and to precedent, that explanations should be entered into upon this occasion referring to a measure of very great importance about to be introduced to this House by me, but the introduction of which has not been moved.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: I shall endeavour, Sir, to guide myself by the wishes of my right honourable friend. But the House will see that in the circumstances the explanation which I had proposed to offer them must be altogether lame and incomplete. It is impossible that I should ever at any future time, any more than now, justify myself completely to the country or to the House of Commons. I cannot do so when my right honourable friend introduces his Land Bill, because he will tell you then that it is not competent for me to speak on his Home Rule scheme.

Mr. GLADSTONE: No, no.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: Well, it does not rest entirely with my right honourable friend, and if he makes no objection the Speaker will call me to order, and it will be impossible for me, in discussing the land purchase scheme, except by consent of the House, to deal with the question of Home Rule. I was only anxious to refer to the scheme for land purchase—I was not going elaborately into details, but dealing only with those general principles—so far as was absolutely necessary to show to the House what was the nature of my opposition to the combined scheme of my right honourable friend. I will endeavour to continue what explanation it may still be possible for me to make with regard to that portion of my objection to the policy of my right honourable friend which refers to his proposals for the government of Ireland. I understood from my right honourable friend on the day of which I am speaking, that he intended to propose to Parliament the establishment of a Parliament in Dublin with very large powers, and he gave some explanation also of the fiscal relations which would exist between this Parliament and the English Parliament. It was after this Cabinet meeting, as I have said—it was held on the 13th—that on the 15th I wrote to my right honourable friend the letter which I had intended to read to the House, and which contained the reasons why I had objected to any considerable

employment of English credit for the purpose of buying out the Irish landlords, and also why I thought the new authority was one which it would be unwise and inexpedient to trust with the possession of the land so bought, with the collection of the rents, and with the payment to this country of the necessary interest and Sinking Fund. My right honourable friend in reply to that letter, told me, without entering into any argument, that he thought my resignation was premature, and that it would be right that I should, at all events, postpone it until he had been able to complete his scheme for local government in Ireland, and had submitted it to the Cabinet. In accordance with his request, therefore, I postponed my resignation until he should be in a position to make his statement, which was on the 26th of March, the next time the Cabinet met. Well, I gathered at that time that as regards the land proposals they were practically and in principle unaltered. But that is a matter on which I do not wish to insist, as I am unable to tell the House what they were originally. It is not really of the slightest consequence whether they were altered or not; but I was going to say that my right honourable friend stated at this meeting the general heads of the scheme for the government of Ireland which he expounded so eloquently last night. I took four principal objections to this proposal. I objected to it, in the first instance, because it proposed to terminate the representation of the Irish members at Westminster. I objected to that because of the consequences which follow upon it. It appeared to me that if the Irish members were to cease to occupy their seats in this House, the Irish Parliament to which they were to be relegated must be, ought to be, and would be, in the future if not in the present, co-ordinate and of co-equal authority. Then I objected, in the second place, to the proposal which at this time my right honourable friend made, to renounce all the exercise of the right of Imperial taxation in Ireland, including, of course, Customs and Excise. I objected, in the third place, to the surrender of the appointment of the judges and of the magistrates. And I objected, in the last place, to the principle under which my right honourable friend proposed to make the new authority supreme in all matters which were not excluded from its competence; whereas I thought the right principle in any such proposal would be to confer upon it authority only

in those cases in which the authority was specially and by statute delegated. In these circumstances I again tendered my resignation, and it was accepted the next day. Now the House will see that since I left the Cabinet there has been one very important change in the proposals. The Customs and Excise are now to be collected and levied by an Imperial authority. Well, Sir, I ought to be pleased; but I confess I am doubtful. I am very glad, of course, that the arguments which I used in the Cabinet had much greater force after I left than they had while I remained. At the same time, however, the concession does not appear to me to have gone far enough. I connected the collection of Customs and Excise with the continued presence of Irish members in this House; and under the system proposed by my right honourable friend you have an anomaly which I cannot help thinking the Irish members themselves must feel intolerable and degrading. ("No, no!") They are the sole judges in such a matter. (Cheers.) I think honourable members are cheering me a little too soon. I believe they are the sole judges as to their own sentiments, and not, of course, of what this Imperial Parliament should do. Well, all I can say is that the new proposal seems to me to be inconsistent with what I understand my right honourable friend laid down as a cardinal principle of our English Constitution—namely, that taxation and representation should go together. (Home Rule cheers.) Honourable members opposite seem inclined to accept this arrangement; so I judge from their cheers; but all I can say is that the honourable member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) has again and again, in his public speeches, stated in the most emphatic way that he would not be satisfied with any Parliament which did not leave the Customs and the Excise, and the right, if necessary, to put a protective duty on Irish industries, with the Irish Authorities.

Mr. PARNELL: I have said frequently, Sir, that I should claim that right for the Irish people; but the right honourable gentleman, the Prime Minister, has certainly, in his speech yesterday, been enabled to show us that we are getting a very good *quid pro quo* in exchange for giving up this right of collecting the Customs, in the shape of £1,400,000 a year.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: Yes, I was coming to that later on, when I have to consider the price which is being paid for the scheme of Home Rule which is submitted to our consideration.

I notice in the scheme, as announced to the House last night, several other—I will not call them changes, but developments of the scheme with which I was not previously acquainted. For instance, I find that from the Irish Parliament are to be excluded such matters as copyright, matters connected with the currency, coining, probably the Post Office, and then comes the very large question of trade and navigation. Now, I confess I am very anxious to know, and I hope some member of the Government will explain, exactly what is meant by trade and navigation. Of course, I assume that the Irish authorities in these circumstances will not be enabled to give a bounty for the encouragement of any local industry. I assume—I do not know whether I am right—that such a question as patents will be altogether excluded from their competence. I assume that such a question as bankruptcy would also be excluded from their competence. These are matters which require explanation, and what I wish to say at this moment is that if all these things are to be taken out of the Irish Parliament and are to be dealt with by the English Parliament, in which the Irish have no representation at all, I cannot help thinking that they would have a very real and considerable grievance. I think the commercial classes of Ireland, for instance, will complain about the question of bankruptcy. At the present time Ireland and Scotland both have separate Bankruptcy Laws from the Bankruptcy Laws of England. How on earth will the Irish be satisfied to have their commercial law, which is to suit their particular idiosyncrasies and requirements, dictated to them at Westminster, when they have not one single representative to express their views in the House of Commons?

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: It will not include bankruptcy.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: Then I do not know what you mean by trade. I hope I am not going beyond the limitation which has been imposed on me when I say briefly my objection is not to one portion of the scheme, but to the scheme as a whole. I object to either part of the scheme. I object—I will not say to the proposal of my right honourable friend, because I do not know what it is—I shall not know until he has explained it in the final form which it has received—but I know this—that whatever it is I shall object if it lays—— (ironical Home Rule cheers). I must say that the zeal of

honourable members opposite overleaps itself. I am not hostile to the scheme of land purchase. What I was going to say when I was interrupted was that I should object to any scheme which laid on the British taxpayer a tremendous liability, and what I thought to be an excessive risk. Above all, I should object to any scheme that was intended only as a bribe to Irish landlords to induce them to modify their hostility to a scheme of Home Rule, and which did not give evidence of an essential and considerable advantage for Irish tenants, who are a class, the poorer tenants especially, deserving of sympathy and assistance. Then I objected to the new authority proposed to be erected, because it was certain to become practically independent. The scheme was one for separation and not for Home Rule. I objected to the two together, because they seemed to me to combine the maximum of risk and the minimum of advantage, and the utmost possible sacrifice for an object which I did not believe it to be worth our while to strive to attain—I do not wish to be misunderstood—the object, of course, being the creation of a separate statutory Parliament in Dublin. I wanted to have said something more about the land, but I pass over that. Only I will say this—a perfectly general remark also, and applying almost to any scheme of land purchase as an inseparable adjunct to a scheme which, in my opinion, practically will place Ireland in the position of Canada. Now, I want to test that illustration of Canada. Canada is loyal and friendly to this country. Ireland, I am sorry to say, at the present time, is not loyal, and cannot be called friendly. But if Canada came to this House, and asked for any large use of British credit in order to buy Canadian land, or to carry out public works in Canada, why, it would be scouted from one end of the Kingdom to the other. Well, then, how can it possibly be right for us to give to Ireland what we refuse to Canada, when the sole result of the scheme, after all, is that we are going to try to put Ireland in the position in which Canada has been for many years? I said I should object to any scheme that involves the British taxpayer in excessive risks. Why is the risk of any scheme excessive? I have been myself an advocate of large schemes in England and Scotland, intended, by the use of public money, to turn a small tenant into the proprietor of the land that he tilled. I have not been

unwilling to take the risk in such a case. But what I object to is to take a risk for what I believe in a short time will be a foreign country. For an integral part of the United Kingdom I am prepared to take a risk ; I am not prepared to take a risk in order to promote what is, in my judgment, a thinly veiled scheme of separation. The fact is, that the key to the whole situation is the proposal to exclude Irish members from this House. I do not wonder that that is a proposal which has many attractions both for Liberal and Conservative members. The honourable member for Cork has often shown that he can be in this House a most agreeable colleague ; but I am sure he will not think me offensive if I say that he and his friends have also shown that they can be very disagreeable at times. He, in one of his speeches, threatened that if his demands were not complied with he would make all legislation impossible.

Mr. PARNELL : I never threatened anything of the kind.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN : I am most glad to accept the denial of the honourable member ; but I can show him the paper in which the words appeared. No doubt, the report is inaccurate.

Mr. PARNELL : Perhaps the right honourable gentleman will read the passage.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN : I have not got it with me ; but I will send to the honourable member, if he likes, the passage, the date, and the place where the speech is alleged to have been made. But I do not want to press it, and I readily accept his statement that he never said so. However, whether he said it or not, there are many people who think he would have the power to do something of that kind ; and that fact weighs very much with English and Scotch members in the desire that they, at all events, should be left alone to carry on English and Scotch business without Irish assistance. I sympathise with that feeling ; but I want to point out to the House that you must take the consequence of that. It is quite unreasonable to turn out the Irish members from this House and leave them entirely unrepresented in reference to matters in which Irish interests are largely concerned and which are dealt with by the Imperial Parliament. Just consider it. Already, under the scheme of the Prime Minister, the Customs and the Excise are to be taken from their control ; all the prerogatives of the Crown are to be removed from their

competence to deal with, as are also the Army and the Navy, and Foreign and Colonial policy. Are the Irish members of opinion that the Irish people would be permanently content to be shut out from all part in the Imperial policy of this country? I was going to quote the honourable member for Cork again, but also from memory. He will tell me if I am wrong. I think that in one of his speeches he said something to the effect that he would never be satisfied until Ireland took her full place among the nations of the world. That is, I think, a patriotic aspiration; but I would point out that it never can be realised under the scheme of my right honourable friend. How can Ireland take her place among the nations of the world when her mouth is closed on every international question? Ireland is to have no part in the arrangement of commercial treaties, by which her interests may be seriously affected. She will have no part whatever in deciding thepolicy under which war may break out, in which her sentiment may be strongly engaged on one side or the other, or which may put in serious peril her own coast and her own people. She is to have no part in the control of the Army and Navy of this country. That is extraordinary, because the annals of our Army show that there have been no more illustrious members of that Army than Irishmen; and Irishmen, under this scheme, are to be content to be sent to battle and to death for matters which Irish representatives are to have no voice in discussing and determining. I say that Ireland, under these circumstances, is asked to occupy a position of degradation; and I venture to predict that, whatever honourable members may now do in order to maintain this instalment of their demands, their own countrymen will never rest satisfied with such an inadequate concession. Again, Ireland is to pay a fixed contribution to the Army and Navy, in which she is to have no part; but that contribution is not to be increased if England gets into difficulty or into war. It may be that in the most terrible crisis of the fate of the Empire Ireland is expected to be indifferent and unaffected, contributing not one single penny in order to secure the safety of the State or the Realm of which she is supposed to form a part. Where, in all this, is the integrity of the Empire? There is another point which I had almost omitted, but which, I think, will be interesting to honourable members opposite. My right honourable friend

raised a smile when he imagined himself in the position of an Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer proposing an Irish budget; and certainly I think that my right honourable friend would never have a more difficult task to perform than if he had to propose and recommend the first Budget presented to the new Irish Parliament. I do not wonder that the honourable member for Cork complained, from his point of view, of this part of the scheme. I do not wonder that he asks the Prime Minister to be more liberal to him, and tells him that unless he is more liberal the cheerful acceptance of his scheme, which he has asked for, and made a condition in putting it forward, will be denied to him. I say he has good reason to be alarmed. But before I consider the position of the Irish taxpayer I wish to consider for a moment the position of the English taxpayer. In this scheme we shall have given independence. We shall continue to burden our own taxpayer with a large contribution in aid of the Irish Government. In the first place, the contribution which Ireland now makes towards the Imperial Expenditure is to be reduced from one in twelve and a half to one in fifteen. I think that my right honourable friend has changed the estimate since I was in the Cabinet. No doubt he had good reasons for it. But I want to point out that, in any case, the result of this reduction is that the difference must be made up by imposing increased taxation on the British taxpayer. Then you have to face this—that if Ireland's contribution is reduced from one in twelve and a half to one in fifteen, whatever balance is required must come out of additional taxation. But that is not all. We are to continue, as I understand, to pay a contribution of £500,000 a year for the Irish Constabulary. The honourable member for Cork says that that is not enough, and that it ought to be much more. Then, if I followed my right honourable friend correctly, we are also indirectly, in connection with the Customs and Excise, to pay to Ireland that nice little sum of £1,400,000 which has reconciled the honourable member for Cork to the exclusion of the Customs and Excise from the work of the Irish Parliament. But will this privilege of buying Customs and Excise in Ireland reconcile the English taxpayer to finding this further sum of £1,400,000? We have also to find £500,000 for the Irish Constabulary, and that makes a charge altogether of £1,900,000 a year, which, capitalised, amounts to £62,700,000,

and this is a sum which we are asked to offer to Ireland together with this scheme of local government. But some will also object to this proposal on behalf of the Irish taxpayer, because it is the peculiarity of this scheme that it will be bad for both parties. In the first place, the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer will have to tell his constituents and the Irish House of Commons that he has to appropriate £3,250,000 annually to the fixed quota of Ireland towards the payment of a debt, any obligation in regard to which Ireland has never recognised, and for the Army and Navy, in the control of which Ireland will have no part. He will have to make this statement year by year, and sooner or later, I think, his constituents will lead him a very evil life. But that is not all. It is said that the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer will, according to the scheme of my right honourable friend, have an annual surplus of £400,000; but I would like to point out on what very slight foundations it rests. I believe the Civil charges of Ireland at present amount to £4,730,000. Deducting from that the Constabulary and Police contributions of £1,000,000 and £500,000 respectively, leaves the Civil charge £3,200,000. But my right honourable friend, in his imaginary Budget, estimated the Civil charges at £2,510,000.

Colonel NOLAN was understood to say that the cost of collection of revenue was included.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: Oh! the cost of collection was added separately, then I understand it. I think my right honourable friend spoke about the importance of establishing economy in Irish expenditure, and I thought he had estimated the economy of a considerable sum. Then the observation I was going to make upon that point will not apply; and, therefore, so far as the expenditure goes, as set forth in the Budget which my right honourable friend laid before us last night, there is nothing to object to. But as regards the revenue, the honourable member for Cork has already pointed out that £6,000,000 out of the £8,000,000 depend on the Excise and Customs, and that a very large part of the £6,000,000 is raised from duty on spirits and tobacco. If, therefore, there be any reduction in the consumption, either in England or Ireland, of spirits, it will be followed at once by a large reduction in the receipts of the Irish Exchequer. But that is not all. I am told—I do not know whether honourable members

opposite will agree to it—that to some extent the trade of Ireland in spirits and porter is threatened by competition from Scotland and elsewhere. Well, of course, if anything occurred to lessen the production of spirits in Ireland and to increase the production in England or Scotland, the loss would fall entirely upon the Irish Exchequer. Under these circumstances, what would the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer have to do? He would have to do one of two things—either to levy further taxation or to repudiate the obligations imposed by this Magna Charta of Ireland. Well, Sir, I thought the statement of the honourable member for Cork on this subject was rather ominous. He did not express, by any means, hearty approval of this part of the scheme. He did not give it a cheerful acceptance. If, then, we do not consent to make this further contribution and to lay a further obligation upon the British taxpayer, the scheme will be accepted grudgingly; and you may be sure that before two or three years have passed away there will be an attempt to get it revised or altered; and if that attempt is persistent, we know what persistency does in a matter of this kind. Now we are told by the advocates of this proposal that we can enforce the bargain, the statutory provisions, by force. I think there may be difficulties in the employment of force. At any rate, it is a contingency which we do not like to have to contemplate when we are making what we are told the Government hope will be a final settlement. I confess, Sir, that for my part, rather than face any agitation which I foresee would be the certain result of a proposal of this kind in the form presented to us, rather than face the irritation between the two countries, the panics which from time to time would prevail, and which would inevitably have the tendency enormously to increase our Army and Navy establishments—rather than face the distraction of all domestic legislation, which will be consequent upon a foreign policy, complicated as it will be by the existence of Ireland in its new and *quasi*-independent situation—I would vote for separation pure and simple. I would wipe off the obligations which exist between England and Ireland as a bad debt; I would prefer that Ireland should go free altogether from any claim on the part of this country, provided also that we might be free from the enormous responsibility which I believe a sham Union would certainly entail. I think

the scheme will come to that in the end, and I would rather face it at once. Before I sit down I should like to try to answer the question which was put by the Prime Minister, and put very forcibly—" What alternative have you got? " I believe this question to be so vital and critical that I think men are bound, however little authority they may have in such a matter, still to do their best to promote a solution of it. Every man is bound to bring his separate contribution. Although I may say to the Prime Minister, using his own language, that it is not for anyone who is not a responsible Minister to prepare or to propose a plan which only a responsible Government has the information or the authority properly to prepare, yet I will not take refuge behind that precedent. I might say that it certainly would be a most strange doctrine that one should be forbidden to refuse a prescription that one thinks to be dangerous because one has not in his pocket a patent remedy which one believes to be a perfect cure. I should think that it would be still stranger that the physician should be called upon to commit suicide if he could not provide an absolute remedy for the disease of his patient. My right honourable friend appears to be under the impression that the only remedy which the opponents of this scheme would propose is that of coercion carried out in a manner and to an extent never hitherto contemplated. Well, at all events, that is not my alternative. I do not believe it is the only alternative. But before I come to that I think it is only fair that I should ask the advocates of this scheme—" How do you propose to carry out this scheme without coercion, and how, if it be adopted, do you propose to maintain its provisions without force? " Sir, it is the difficulty, one of the great difficulties of this problem, that Ireland is not a homogeneous community—that it consists of two nations—(" No, no! ")—that it is a nation which comprises two races and two religions. (" No, no! ") At least honourable members will not deny that. And whatever the Roman Catholics of Ireland may think of this matter, it is certain that the Protestants will believe, rightly or wrongly, that it is injurious to them, and that they will resist it. (Cries of " No, no! ") I am not pledging my opinion to the statements that have been made that they will resist by force. I know nothing about that. But I say that their opposition is to be reckoned with and

counted upon, and that it ought not to be ignored by this House. I have not a word to say against the Roman Catholic population of Ireland; but I certainly might say a good deal in favour of the Protestant population. In Ulster they are prosperous and industrious and enterprising, and in Belfast they have rivalled the peaceful activity of Glasgow, of Manchester, and of Birmingham. Throughout the Southern Provinces you find the Protestants scattered here and there in isolated groups and little congregations, and wherever they exist they are the nucleus of industry and enterprise, and the rallying point and centre for all the loyal population. If you are going to carry this scheme in the face of the opposition of one-fifth of the population of Ireland—I believe the proportion is even greater; and if, unhappily, they should feel their interests so much compromised that they resist your decision, how are you to enforce it? Are you going to apply coercion to the loyal and law-abiding population while you taunt us, with a desire and intention, which do not in fact exist, to apply it to those who have not always been loyal or law-abiding? I go further, and I ask how are you going to enforce the provisions of your statutory Parliament, with the conditions and the limitations you have imposed? It is perfectly certain that they will be objected to and be the subject of agitation. You will have Resolutions of this Irish Parliament protesting against them, and in some times of difficulty and danger you may have these Resolutions supported by threats. What are you going to do? You must admit that force is at the bottom of your proposition, and when you come to the foundation there is still coercion, unless, indeed, you mean to tell us you will surrender everything rather than use force; in which case why not surrender everything at once? The peculiarity of your coercion is that you postpone it until it may be difficult, or even impossible, of application. I will, however, give a more practical answer to the question of the Prime Minister than any *tu quoque*, however effective it might be. I do not believe that coercion is the only or the necessary alternative. I say that after the facts which were stated by the Leaders of the late Government, and which were repeated and confirmed last night by the Prime Minister as to the present state of affairs in Ireland, there is, at all events, no case for coercion at present. The number of outrages is comparatively

small; there is no great social disorder; there is a certain amount of intimidation, no doubt; but there is no case for coercion. The influence of the honourable member for Cork, of his friends, and of the National League, has been sufficient to prevent people from doing anything in the nature of extended outrage. I believe that that influence, which has been so effective, will be continued; but I do not rely on that alone. What is the cause that makes a recrudescence of crime possible in Ireland? It is connected with the agrarian situation. There lies the danger. If any discontent should be felt in consequence of a refusal to grant the demands of the Irish people, that discontent may take the form of refusal to pay rent, and then if rent were sought to be recovered by the ordinary legal processes, outrage, violence, and crime would undoubtedly follow. But if we could put this cause out of the way, is there any reason to anticipate that there would be any such crime as would justify or necessitate any resort to repressive measures? My first answer to the Prime Minister, then, is this—I would put this cause out of the way for a time; I would try to continue the truce—it might almost be called the truce of God—happily existent in Ireland now; I would bring in a Bill to stay all evictions for a period of six months, leaving any arrears to be settled in connection with the final settlement; and as this would be done in the interests of the United Kingdom, I would throw upon the Government of the United Kingdom the duty of lending to those landlords who might have any need of it such a proportion of their rents as would save them from necessity and privation. I would take from the landlords for a great Imperial purpose their present legal right of process for the recovery of rents, which might possibly amount to £4,000,000 sterling; and I would advance, if necessary, on the security of the land, a specified proportion of those rents until the whole matter should have been settled. I would do that without hesitation, as the risk of such a transaction would be infinitesimal as compared with the risks of which we shall hear something later on. I would hope by these means, by putting a stop to the procedure which has been a prime cause of crime and outrage in Ireland—I would hope that we should get a further interval of six months, which could be used for finding a settlement of this question. I admit that it cannot remain altogether unsettled.

I would carry on the inquiry which has been begun by the Prime Minister and the Government; but I would no longer have it carried on by a single individual, however colossal his intelligence may be. I would not have it carried on by a single party, however important, however influential it may be in this House—I would strive to carry it on with the assent and co-operation of all parties in the House. I would have it carried on by a Committee or Commission which would represent all sections of this House—both parties of Englishmen and Scotchmen, and both parties of Irishmen also. But upon what lines would I seek such a settlement? I hope the House does not think that I am presuming. I feel there is some presumption in offering an opinion; but I do it only in answer to the demands—the request—which was made by the Prime Minister. In what direction, then, do I think the solution is to be found? It has been assumed in some quarters that I am pedantically devoted to some plan of National Councils, of which a good deal was heard some six months ago. That is an entire mistake. My right honourable friend will bear me out when I say that I did not think it worth while, in the face of the much greater, much more complete, much more important proposal which he made even to offer one word in favour of National Councils. The notion of National Councils was started to meet a different state of things and a different problem. It was started in connection with a scheme for a thorough Municipal Government in Ireland, and in connection with that I think it was a very good notion. But it has, at the present moment, one fatal defect—if honourable members opposite were at any time disposed to give it their consideration they are no longer willing to do so; they reject it; and, under these circumstances, Heaven forfend that any English party or statesman should attempt to impose that benefit upon them. The question now is different. At the time when I myself thought there was something in the idea of a Municipal Council as affording a vent to a great deal of political activity in Ireland, my proposals were considered too extreme by some of my colleagues who have now been successful in making them too moderate. Those National Councils I, for one, am not likely to put forward again. I no longer regard that scheme as a solution; and I confess—if I may venture

with great respect to say so—that I think, after the speech of my right honourable friend, after the fact that a most important proportion of one of the great parties in the State, has been willing, at all events, to entertain the proposal of the right honourable gentleman, it is only a very large proposal which can at any future time be accepted as a solution of this vast question. I should look for the solution in the direction of the principle of federation. My right honourable friend has rather looked for his model to the relations between this country and her self-governing and practically independent colonies. I think that that is of doubtful expediency. The present connection between our colonies and ourselves is no doubt very strong, owing to the affection which exists between members of the same nation. But it is a sentimental tie, and a sentimental tie only. It is rather curious that my right honourable friend should have looked in this direction just at the moment when between the colonies and this country there is a general desire to draw tighter the bonds which unite us and to bring the whole Empire into one federation. I can hardly bring myself to believe that the honourable member for Cork looks with entire satisfaction upon a proposal which will substitute such a connection as that which exists between Canada and this country—a connection, remember, which might be broken to-morrow if there were the slightest desire on the part of Canada to terminate it; because no one would think of employing force in order to tie any reluctant self-governing colony in continued bonds to this country—I think the honourable member for Cork would hardly like to see a tie of that kind substituted for that which at present exists. At all events, if he would, he would differ from many distinguished Irishmen who have preceded him. I will not quote some of the great orators of a past generation; but I will quote Mr. Butt, who, speaking ten years ago in this House, said—

> He, for one, was not willing to give up his share in the power and government of that Empire, and really since the Union he did not see how it was possible to give it up. Since the Union the wars which had brought Possessions to England had been carried on by the spending of Irish treasure and the shedding of Irish blood. India had been won by the British Empire in the same way, and Ireland had acquired with England partnership rights which it would be impossible to distribute, and of which Ireland could only have her share by continuing to be represented in that House.—(3 *Hansard* [230], 740.)

It may be that Mr. Butt's views are rather antiquated at this time; but I would refer to an opinion of a distinguished member of the party opposite—I mean the honourable member for Sligo (Mr. Sexton)—who, speaking at Dublin the other day, said—

If we do not retain a voice in Imperial affairs, and keep part and parcel of the Imperial Parliament, the country will be degraded to the position of a province.

Well, that is what Irish members are asked to agree to under the scheme of my right honourable friend. It appears to me that the advantage of a system of federation is that Ireland might under it really remain an integral portion of the Empire. The action of such a scheme is centripetal and not centrifugal, and it is in the direction of federation that Democratic movement has made most advances in the present century. My right honourable friend has referred to foreign precedents; but surely they are all against him. He did not refer to United Italy. In Italy, different nations, different states, which have had independent existences for centuries, have been welded together. Even where federation has been adopted it has always been in the case of federating States which were previously separate. It has been intended to bring nations together, to lessen the causes of difference, and to unite them more closely in a common union. Take the case of Germany, for instance. Germany has been united upon a system of federation which has brought together nations long separated. Take the great case—the greatest case of all—of the United States of America. Ah, Sir, there you have the greatest Democracy the world has ever seen, and a Democracy which has known how to fight in order to maintain its union. It has fought for, and triumphantly maintained, the Imperial Union of the United States; but it has known, also, how to respect all local differences. Yes, Sir, I cannot but remember that in the time of its greatest crisis, when it was in the most terrible moment of its fate, my right honourable friend counselled the disintegration of the United States.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I did not counsel it.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: My right honourable friend says he did not counsel it; but he gave the weight of his great name to the statement that the Northern and Southern States had become separate nations. Well, Sir, no one doubted at that

time the sincerity of my right honourable friend, or the purity of his motives. Nobody doubts them now; but everybody will admit—I dare say my right honourable friend himself would admit—that in that view of the situation in the United States he made a mistake.

Mr. GLADSTONE: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: Are you certain he is not making a mistake again? Well, Sir, I say that in my view the solution of this question should be sought in some form of federation, which would really maintain the Imperial unity, and which would, at the same time, conciliate the desire for a national local government which is felt so strongly by the constituents of honourable members opposite. I do not say that we should imitate the great models to which I have referred. Our Constitution and the circumstances of the case are different. I say that I believe that it is on this line, and not on the line of our relations with our self-governing colonies, that it is possible to seek for and find a solution of the difficulty. I have now only to thank the House for the indulgence which it has given to me. I regret that my explanation has been necessarily to some extent incomplete. I have, however, said sufficient to put the House in possession of the main reasons why I have ceased to be a minister of the Crown. Sir, there are some persons, servile partisans, who disgrace public life, who say that I have been guilty of treachery because I have resigned an office which I could no longer hold with honour. What would these men have been entitled to say of me if, holding the opinions that I do, which I expressed before joining the Government, and which I have expressed to-day, I had remained on that bench pretending to serve my country with a lie upon my lips? I do not assume—Heaven knows I do not pretend—to dogmatise on a question of this kind. I do not say that I am right in the conclusion at which I have arrived; I do not presume to condemn those who honestly differ from me; but of one thing I am certain—that I should have been guilty of an incredible shame and baseness if I had clung to place and office in support of a policy which in my heart I believe to be injurious to the best interests of Ireland and of Great Britain.

LORD MORLEY

Speech in the Town Hall at Rochdale, after the statue of John Bright had been unveiled, on the 24th of October, 1891

MR. MORLEY, who was received with loud cheers, said :— Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen,—As Mr. Brierley in his very excellent remarks observed, the occasion that has brought us together is one that has united the sympathy, the active interest, and the practical support of men and women of all political opinions and all religious opinions, and, as the Chairman observed, the interest and support of all classes, from the wealthy down to the humblest and the most lowly. (Cheers.) I may be forgiven for adding that the fact that the invitation to take a prominent part in this ceremony was conveyed to me, whose misfortune it was not to be able to take sides with Mr. Bright in the great controversy of his closing days, is an additional illustration that this is not an occasion of a partial, a narrow, or an exclusive description, but is one that touches the interests and sympathies of Englishmen of all kinds, equally and alike. (Cheers.)

We have recalled the outward semblance and the bodily presence of this illustrious man, and I think I am only saying what you would desire me to say, when I express my opinion, which I believe is yours too, that the sculptor has succeeded with admirable skill in reproducing the comeliness of mien, the dignity, the pose, the gesture, which we all knew and remember so well. (Cheers.) I am strongly inclined to think that if we all did what was the best thing for us, we should now, after having performed this ceremony, go to our own homes and read for ourselves one of those famous speeches of Mr. Bright, which from their language, their purpose, and their effect on men's minds, are his titles to lasting honour. However, in scenes like this it is expected that we should not part in silence, so, instead of doing what is best for us, I shall ask you to listen for a short time to a few observations as to which I cannot for a moment flatter myself that they possess any originality.

We stand at a distance of eighty years from the date of

Mr. Bright's birth, and of fifty years from his entry into Parliamentary life. It would be idle for me to attempt to tell over again, in the midst of those among whom he lived, the story of his days. You know his upbringing in that religious body among the prime articles of whose creed is hatred of war, abhorrence of slavery, absence of formal or professional priesthood, the freedom of religion, and of the indwelling light in the mind and conscience of men, from all connection with the powers of the earth. You know how he was surrounded from his youth by men earning their bread by hard toil and with honourable industry. He had no marked advantages of literary education, but he was blessed with an inborn readiness to take an active and an understanding concern in objects of great public interest. When he was some four-and-twenty years old, his views of national policy were thrown into definite shape by reading a remarkable pamphlet by a man whom also, though he was not your townsman, you know well in Rochdale, I mean Cobden. (Cheers.) Mr. Bright said himself of this pamphlet of Cobden's—it was called *England, Ireland, and America*—that it excelled in sagacity, in foresight, and in practical wisdom any political essay that had ever been published in our tongue. And I believe myself that those who are most competent to judge, and those who have read this pamphlet, and have measured its place in political history, will be of the mind that Mr. Bright did not at all in these words exaggerate its value.

Mr. Bright looked round, and he perceived that Cobden's reading of what he saw about him was elevated, was practical, was wise, and fitted in with the whole spirit of his own early teaching and his own early surroundings. They became comrades and fellow-workers, bound to one another by a true and faithful friendship, which lasted as long as their common lives, and stands as one of the purest, closest, and most magnanimous friendships in our political history.

Mr. Bright had not been long engaged in his first great public task, which, as you all know, was the repeal of the taxes on food, before it was found that he possessed the natural gifts of a great orator; that he had the power by his speeches to excite, to interest, to convince, to exalt. In a country governed by Parliament, and by public meetings, it is obvious that the power of a great speaker must be a power of almost

the first importance, and that circumstance has led many to satirise the British system as government by talk. I am not now going to discuss that question, though it is one full of interest. I will only remark—and it is not irrelevant on an occasion like this—that it has been pointed out, that if you look at English political history from the days of Sir Robert Walpole down to the days of Lord Palmerston, with three or four exceptions, you will find that those who have taken the foremost place in the English politics of their times have not been orators of the first class. One great exception is well known to all of us. But even in the case of Mr. Gladstone—(cheers)—the exception best known to us, it will not be forgotten that he first established his great ascendancy in Parliament and in the country by his practical achievements in the sphere of public business, and by his unsurpassed mastery over the financial system of his country.

Therefore we should not have been here to-day, I venture to say, if Mr. Bright had been no more than a great master of tropes and figures, images, perorations, and all the rest of rhetorical paraphernalia. He once himself said caustically in the House of Commons of some one that he would be a very good speaker if you did not listen to what he said. (Laughter.) In the same vein, Mr. Bright once said, as to thinkers in Parliament, that the worst of great thinkers is that they so very often think wrong. (Laughter.) Well, we are not here to-day merely because we think that he was always right; we are not here because he made speeches, which were magnificent apart from their contents. No; eloquence is more than words. Speech is not eloquence. Eloquence is character, conviction, sincerity, purpose, service, fitness—eloquence is the moment, is the man. (Cheers.)

The fashion of oratory changes. Lord Derby, in his admirable speech on a similar occasion to this a fortnight ago, said something about Burke. Certainly, Burke's two speeches on American taxation and American conciliation I have always regarded as the most masterly manual of civil wisdom in the English language. Still I think if those speeches were made now in the House of Commons we should see member after member slipping away into the noble ease of the library, or the more ignoble ease of the smoking-room. (Laughter.) I should say that the foundation of Mr. Bright's oratory—

and remember this is not merely literary examination, but in criticising the oratory, we are criticising the character of the man whom we are met here to-day to honour—I should say that the foundation of his oratory was, first, the possession of a body of what to him were living principles; secondly, his gift of thoroughly mastering the facts of his case, with his rare power and skilful use of and firm control over detail; thirdly, that he always had, in every speech he made, a definite and practical end without which deliberative eloquence is nought, and even worse than nought; fourthly, he constantly appealed to the strong parts of human character, and to the higher aspects of national destiny; fifthly, and most important, there was in every speech he made a moral fervour, beating like a pulse under the array of spoken words, warming political objects into moral objects, and sending a current of moral ideas like a Gulf Stream, enriching political discussion, nourishing it, and making it alive. (Cheers.)

On one occasion, Lord Palmerston—to whom he was all his life in active and direct antagonism—spoke of him as "the honourable and reverend gentleman," and scoffed at what he said as things for the pulpit. Lord Palmerston did not know the spirit of the times into which he had survived. (Hear, hear.) It was Mr. Bright's power of appeal to reverence, to human sympathy, to pity—it was these things that gave him his almost unrivalled authority over those great audiences, so well known now to all of us, who are dimly feeling their way through the intricacies of political fact and the long bewilderment of political controversy, but who always mean to follow what is right, who are always eager to stretch out a hand to the downtrodden and helpless, and who, even in their hours of delusion and of false enchantment, are always ready to take a high and generous view, and always to repel a low or a base or an ignoble one. (Cheers.)

Though he belonged to the persuasion of Non-resistance, he had plenty of that sprit of contention without which public life is hardly possible in a free country. Mr. Bright was not famous for handling his opponents tenderly, and I suppose nobody ever less implicitly followed the apostolic injunction to "suffer fools gladly." (Laughter.) Dr. Johnson said that "to treat your opponent in argument with respect, is to give him an advantage to which he is not fairly entitled."

Few of Mr. Bright's antagonists ever gained that unlawful advantage. He thought that old Fuller was not far wrong when he said that he should suspect that a man's preaching had little salt in it if no galled horse did wince. (Laughter.)

Apart from the direct objects of Mr. Bright's career there were two services which he rendered in a pre-eminent degree, though the shallow and the cynical may say, if they please, that they are no better than dilettantism and sentimentalism. The first was that he was careful of the dignity and simplicity of the English tongue. (Hear, hear.) I remember when he was kind enough to perform for me the friendly office of reading through the proof-sheets of a book which it was my fortune to write upon Cobden—(cheers)—how prompt he was all through that task, particularly to note any slipshod, any loose, any affected, any too familiar expression. His literary taste on all these points was perfect. Here, as in so much else, he had caught the spirit of Milton, who said that next to the man who advises his countrymen with wise and intrepid counsel of government, he valued most the man who liked and cared for the purity of his mother-tongue—(cheers)—and therefore there is something particularly appropriate in the circumstance that, as I gather from the Chairman, it is intended to devote some portion of the fund which has been raised to the foundation of a scholarship for literature in connection with Victoria University.

The second service was this. It is a striking thing, and I think it is a promising and a fruitful thing, that this man, who in his day was called a revolutionist and a destroyer, should have been the first and strongest to appeal to historic precedents and to the great forefathers of English freedom two centuries ago. A political leader does well to strive to keep our English democracy historic, and to make them ready magnanimously to praise great men, and our fathers that begat us. (Cheers.) John Bright would have been a worthy comrade for John Hampden, John Selden, John Pym. He had the very spirit of the Puritan leaders. He had their brave and honest heart, their sound and sedate judgment, their manly hatred of oppression, of bad laws, of all government outside laws. Besides, that is true of John Bright which the historian has said of John Pym, that he had the civic temper and habit of looking for wisdom in the result of common

debate, rather than in one supereminent mind. It was this that made him glory in the House of Commons. He despised the gladiatorial triumphs of the Parliamentary arena, and scorned the fleeting laurels of its contentions, but no man who has ever lived has more deeply and profoundly honoured the grand traditions and the great responsibilities of the mother of Parliaments. (Cheers.)

He had the same foundation of religion as had the Puritan leaders. He took, as they did, civil duty to be a part of religion, though happily there has come into the nineteenth century a wide tolerance, an appreciation of spiritual and intellectual freedom, which was hardly possible to the Puritan leader in the seventeenth century." You remember a beautiful reflection in one of Mr. Bright's speeches. He said : " I accept the belief in a grand passage which I once met with in the writings of the illustrious founder of the colony of Pennsylvania, who says that the humble, meek, merciful, just, pious, and devout souls are everywhere of one religion, and when death has taken off the mask they will know one another, though the diverse liveries they wear here make them strangers." (Cheers.) Yes, it is good to think that this wise and strong tolerance in these supreme concerns springs in his case, as I hope it springs in the whole temper of this generation, not from slackness, not from indifference, but from a better understanding of one another. (Hear, hear.)

The most signal practical successes of Mr. Bright were undoubtedly Free Trade and the enlargement of the Parliamentary franchise. These were his two most signal practical successes. The grandest exhibition of his moral courage, and one of the very grandest in our history, was the stern and unquailing front with which he resisted the flood of popular prejudice and passion raging at the time of the Crimean war—(cheers)—raging in favour of a conflict which Mr. Bright regarded not only as a terrible crime before high heaven, but as destructive of the best and the truest interests of the country. (Cheers.) Then, the most striking passage of his rhetorical performances, taken singly and as a whole, I dare say many will think was the speech he made in Birmingham in the year 1858—a well-known and famous speech. But I confess my own view that it was during the Civil War in America that we saw all Mr. Bright's highest and greatest gifts at their best.

The force of his vision and of his hopes for the destiny of mankind was never more keen, the masculine strength of his argument never was so massive and so exalted, the power of his language never so commanding and so pathetic, as during that mighty struggle, when, in his own sublime words, " a continent reeled under the American nation during four years of agony, till at last, after the smoke of the battlefield had cleared away, the horrid shape of slavery, which had cast its shade over the whole continent, had vanished and had gone for ever." (Cheers.) As we look back, as we survey all his career, as we remember the enormous importance at that moment of the crisis of the relations between Great Britain and the United States of America—looking back and remembering the impression he made on the public opinion of his country, we may say of him in connection with it, that he was one of those who have turned the balance of the greatest events. (Cheers.)

Mr. Bright was constantly taunted with being parochial. It was said of him that he cared for no country but his own, and then he was usually charged in the very same breath by the very same people with being a cosmopolitan who cared for every other country except his own. As if anything could be less parochial than Free Trade! As if you can trace parochialism in the contrast that he drew between Rome—lone mother of dead empires—and England—the living mother of " great nations on the American and Australian Continents, who promise to endow the world with all her knowledge and all her civilisation, and something more than the freedom that she herself enjoys "! What was there parochial in his splendid and beneficent vision of the English-speaking nations all bound together, not by the bars and framework of some cast-iron political machinery, but each in its own way working out the common principles of free government in a deliberate and well compacted peace with one another? (Cheers.) Far more parochial was the statesmanship that would have plunged us into war for some sanguinary scuffle of a Don Carlos in Spain, or Don Miguel in Portugal, or in Savoy, or Schleswig-Holstein—there was the true parochialism, and not in Mr. Bright. (Cheers.)

Many fine and true things have been said of George Washington. I always think one of the finest and one of the truest was this, that " Washington changed mankind's ideas of political greatness." And we may say of Mr. Bright that he

changed our ideas of national greatness. (Cheers.) You remember these beautiful words of his: "Palaces, baronial castles, great halls, stately mansions—these do not make a nation. The nation in every country dwells in the cottage; and unless the light of your Constitution can shine there, unless the beauty of your legislation, and the excellence of your statesmanship are impressed there on the feelings and conditions of the people, rely upon it you have yet to learn the duties of government." (Cheers.) This is a consideration which sounds very obvious and very simple, and yet which rulers and Parliaments and Cabinets are all very liable to forget, and this was the consideration which lay at the root of all his public endeavour for Free Trade, for extended suffrage, for wise and just diplomacy, for peace. Mr. Bright very well knew that the duty of statesmen is to see that your country shall be strong. He did not shrink even from the approval of war, when the existence of the majestic fabric of American union was at stake. He knew that the business of the statesman is to keep his country strong, but he insisted the strength of a country must be sought in what I may call the moral reason of things. He fought for Free Trade, for the admission of new classes to the suffrage, for public economy, for wise and just diplomacy affecting the rights of other nations, because he believed all these things were the key to England's holding her place as a powerful and beneficent nation among the great states of the world.

I am not going to take you, even for a moment, over the ground of the Free Trade controversy, nor, in fact, over any of the disputed political points which arose in the course of his career. The distinguished man who has for the last five years presided over the Government of this country, said the other day that the doctrines of the Manchester School in their old intensity were now repudiated and disavowed. This may be partially true of their "old intensity," but if we look round, we do not see that the doctrines of the Manchester School, in all that was sound in them, have in any degree lost their hold upon the policy of this country. (Cheers.) All responsible men, for instance, admit that given a country like ours, with a gigantic manufacturing plant, with a huge manufacturing population, being mainly dependent upon other countries for its food and for its raw material—such a country can have

but one policy, and that policy, if it be conducted by wise men, must and can only be a policy of peace, of non-intervention, and of Free Trade. (Cheers.) When Mr. Bright entered Parliamentary life this was nothing short of industrial life or death to the country. I know it is said that Free Trade was carried by a parcel of Lancashire manufacturers, who had a sharp eye to the main chance and were looking after their own pockets. To take that view is to misunderstand entirely and absolutely the whole body of principles upon which Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden uniformly argued their case. And the propositions, I venture to say, which these two men established in the minds of the country, are now accepted, and finally and permanently accepted for all serious purposes, by both parties in the State as the basis of the economic policy of this country. (Cheers.)

Mr. Bright would have been the last man to claim place either as a great originator of new ideas of national policy, like Cobden, or as a great practical instrument for carrying out the policy of others, like Sir Robert Peel. His instinct probably told him that his place was one not any less high—to be the adviser and the counsellor of his countrymen. It is quite true that he did not always avoid Ministerial responsibility but for the Parliamentary arts of making and keeping majorities, of measuring the exact ripeness of questions for Parliamentary treatment, for the necessity of somehow or other carrying on the Queen's Government—all of this inevitable, but rather slippery, ground, Mr. Bright would never tread. But it was, with the greatest reluctance, as he told the world, that he ever consented to accept office. Mr. Gladstone has told me that he had to wrestle with him—I think from nine o'clock one night until one o'clock in the morning—before he could induce him to take office in 1868. Mr. Bright felt that his mission was rather that of a counsellor, standing outside of practice and administration. At the same time he was no pedant, he was no irreconcilable, he was always willing to help when he saw a Minister steering the ship of State in the direction in which he wished it to go. He was always ready to make allowances for difficulties. He pressed no unreasonable exactions upon friends in office. He was the most loyal and helpful of colleagues, endeavouring to make things easy and not difficult. You know that he himself preferred the simple

position of plain citizenship; and the answer came from his heart when he used those beautiful words of the Shunamite woman, that she liked best to dwell among her own people. (Cheers.)

I do not propose to attempt to survey the various fields in which he was active and exercised vast influence. You know how much he cared for India. You know how vigilantly he watched our almost ceaseless frontier wars, and how strenuously he protested against a harsh or lawless or oppressive bearing against inferior races. Everybody knows, again, that there was no subject which engaged his most anxious meditations from the time of the famine of 1846-7 to the day of his death, than that of Ireland. It occupied a foremost place in his thoughts, and inspired many of his most admirable speeches. In 1881, in a speech that he made at the Mansion House in London, talking about the Irish Land Act, which had just become law, he used some remarkable words—and I hope nobody will suppose I am going for a moment to violate what I may call the sacred spirit of this occasion by introducing a word of controversy. His words were these—

> I have said that there are fears—I have fears—that after the state of things through which the Irish people have gone in so many successive periods, it is not perhaps quite certain that all remedial measures are not too late. I will not express a strong fear that such is the case; on the contrary, I will express a strong hope that such is not the case.

Five years after that, some of his old colleagues adopted a new policy, based on the belief that, with respect to remedial measures of the partial and limited kind of which Mr. Bright was speaking, his fears and not his hopes had come true. I remember the first time that I saw Mr. Bright after the formation of the Cabinet of 1886. As he shook hands with me in the lobby he glanced at me with an eye of rebuke, and intimated pretty bluntly with how little favour he viewed the course on which we had embarked. Well, gentlemen, it was not for me, in the words of a Greek disciple about his teacher, "It was not for me to lay hands on my father Parmenides." I will only repeat here what I said in the House of Commons on the day of his death, that one of the deepest feelings in the minds of many of us during those months of stress and conflict and sharp controversy, was a feeling of regret that the last days of so noble a career should have been in any degree

clouded or made less happy by division from the comrades and fellow-workers of a lifetime. (Cheers.)

Here I will leave this memorable man. I have already told in Rochdale how, one evening at One Ash, he mused over the contrast between the enormous space that a public man fills in the eye and in the ear of his generation whilst he is living, with the silence that seems to fall about his name when the last page of the book of his career has been closed. We may be sure of this, that Mr. Bright's name will be perpetuated in material less perishable than marble or bronze. (Hear, hear.) It is quite true that the chill of time congeals the glowing current of fervid speech, and hardens the orator's molten metal into dull and inanimate shapes. Yet I cannot suppose but that many a page of Mr. Bright's is so classic in form, so noble in thought, so apt in principle and application to great occasions of national life, that they will live to be a lamp for many a generation of Englishmen in times to come. (Cheers.) It has been well said that monuments, anniversaries, statues, are schools whose lessons sink deep. So this statue, to the minds of future generations, as they pass it in going to and fro about the affairs of their daily business, will recall a lofty example, a man of unshaken firmness and constancy, a faithful, an enlightened, an unselfish citizen, and a great and a famous pleader for the best causes of mankind. (Loud cheers.)

LORD ROSEBERY

At the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, at the Centenary of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, November 1, 1897

I AM deeply grateful to you for the cordiality of your reception to-night. It is at any time an honour to speak in the Free Trade Hall to a great audience of Manchester citizens such as this is. But on this occasion I deem it a signal though rather an embarrassing distinction. I venture to think that there was among your cheers to-night a note of compassion when you received me. And I will tell you why. On such occasions as these, when you have the Free Trade Hall crowded to the roof, you expect from some eminent politician a controversial speech, spiced with epigram and possibly not removed from personality, which shall tickle the political palate of the audience and keep it in a state of agreeable excitement. But to-night we can have none of these things. This is one of those occasions which I think are somewhat too rare among us when great audiences meet together, composed of both, or perhaps I ought rather to say of all, the parties in the State—(laughter) —from which, therefore, everything of a controversial kind is banished. (Hear, hear.) It is all very well to say "hear, hear," but is the gentleman who says "hear, hear" prepared to discourse for an hour on an uncontroversial topic with eloquence and vivacity before a crowded audience? (Laughter.) If he is, I am willing to give place to him.

THE MANCHESTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: AN HISTORICAL RETROSPECT

Now, the occasion that we are met to celebrate to-night is of a very much more peaceful character. I have enumerated some of the disabilities under which I lie to-night, but I have not named what, after all, perhaps, is the greatest, that we are assembled to commemorate the centenary of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and it is not a centenary at all. I confess that when I ascertained from my friend the president that such was the case my courage almost failed me. How was

I to come, in these days of epochs and anniversaries, to celebrate a centenary which had already long passed by? But the gloomy fact of the situation is this, that your centenary took place, not in 1897, but in 1894. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce, like many human beings, was vague as to the date of its birth—and only discovered it recently in an accidental exploration. Well, after all, "better late than never." It is a good occasion; it is a time that we must not neglect. We must never forget the foundation of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and it would have been better to defer the celebration for ten or fifteen or twenty years too late than not to commemorate it at all. (Hear, hear.) The birth of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce took place in wild times of war and difficulty. The year 1794 found us in the midst of revolution; in the second year of a war with France, in the very commencement of a struggle which was destined to last for nearly twenty years. I can hardly imagine a more gloomy moment for the birth of so peaceful an institution as this. And what was it that the Manchester Chamber of Commerce set itself to do? Although it was patronised by the great men of Manchester of that day—the Peels and the others—all that it attempted to do, or at any rate its primary duty, was this, to establish a black list of firms abroad with whom it was not safe to deal. And what was the result of this effort of Manchester in 1794? That black list contained only one name, and that name upon consideration was expunged. I venture to think that was very creditable to Manchester in those days. We all of us have our black lists. There is not an individual in this hall who has not his confidential black list, who has not his political black list, who has not his literary black list, who has not his social black list, and who, perhaps, has not his financial black list. But I venture to say there is not a single person here that is so fortunate as the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and has only one name on the black list that he keeps in his innermost mind. Now, no one, I think, could have augured from that humble beginning the imperial destiny, the cosmopolitan destiny, reserved for the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. I pass over nearly half a century of work, useful work, employed in deputations to the Governments of the day, employed perpetually in the work of endeavouring to free commerce from its chains;

and I come to the great critical epoch of your history, which was December, 1838.

Advent of the Anti-Corn-Law League

Before December, 1838, two events had happened in Manchester which were destined to bear the most speedy fruit. In a small room over a stable in a Manchester hotel-yard there had met in October, 1838, seven men, who had then set on foot a resolution to form a league, which should not be dissolved till the corn laws were done away with. About the same time Mr. Ashworth tells us in his history that he was walking with Mr. Cobden, I think it was in Liverpool—and they had been talking of these taxes, and Cobden stopped and said, "I will tell you what it is, Ashworth, we will use the Manchester Chamber of Commerce as a lever for doing away with the corn laws." And what Cobden said he usually did; so he came to Manchester in December, 1838, and in two great meetings he beat the governing body of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, which was not so enlightened as himself, and he got the Chamber of Commerce to petition for a repeal of the laws relating to the importation of foreign corn and other foreign articles of subsistence. Now, I think that that occasion reflects undying lustre on Manchester and its Chamber of Commerce. Cobden himself said afterwards that "just as Jerusalem was with the origin of our faith, and just as Mecca was in the eyes of the Mahometans, so would Manchester be identified in the eyes of historians as the birthplace and the centre of the greatest moral movement since the introduction of printing." There is no need to tell you here to whom you owe this achievement. You, Sir, have dealt in your introductory remarks on some of the names that occurred to you; but I venture to say that it is not necessary in Manchester, it would be almost impertinent on the part of a stranger, to run over the Homeric list of names which constitute the glory of this movement. It would be still more difficult to give the full meed of approval to those unknown workers, those unknown givers, who swelled so largely the success of that movement. There is one name, however, that we cannot forget to-night. That is the name of the Parliamentary pioneer of the movement, who was enabled to work for it before Cobden ever became a member

of Parliament, who lives happy among us in a green and honoured old age, who is still a member of the House of Commons, who still sits for Wolverhampton, the pedestal from which he urged that reform—I mean, of course, Charles Pelham Villiers. This movement had another rare distinction. It produced a great poet and a great orator. The poet was Ebenezer Elliott; the orator was John Bright. When one thinks of John Bright in this Free Trade Hall of Manchester, and of the eloquence with which he has thrilled it, one almost feels inclined to sit down or to leave the hall. But it is difficult for anyone who has had the honour of his acquaintance not to pay one word of tribute to his memory, as one knew him—to his geniality, to his kindliness, to his simplicity, to his inherent dignity, to his horror of all that was false, or cowardly, or untrue. I think there is nothing in all the annals of our political history so completely and analloyedly beautiful as the political brotherhood of Cobden and Bright, the great twin brethren who slew the corn laws. I suppose they each of them were to some extent the complement of each other. Each had in superabundance qualities which thrown into the common stock made an irresistible force. Cobden had the sagacity, the persuasion, the initiative; Bright the splendour and the eloquence. And he had something else. Bright, as you know, was a Quaker, but he was the most pugnacious Quaker that ever lived—and I think we may say, without any fear of contradiction from any member of that peaceful and excellent sect, that the pugnacity of Bright had something to do with the repeal of the corn laws. What, then, were the weapons with which this gigantic contest was carried on? It was not carried on with the arm of the flesh. "Our march," said the League, in its farewell manifesto, "has been stained by no blood, and our success is sullied by no tears." No, they slew their giant with the smooth stone from the brook of hard facts, and there is no more formidable weapon. When they started on their crusade it was no doubt to some extent a class crusade. It was the old crusade carried on by the townspeople against the country people. They would not have been able to raise the vast sums that they did for a purely abstract and philanthropic enterprise. But remember one or two things in connection with that. It very soon ceased to be a class agitation, and comprehended almost all classes of

the community before it had achieved its victory. The next point is this, that, if it was a class agitation, it was a class struggle in more senses than one, because it was a class fighting against a class—it was the commercial class fighting against the landed class. And, in the third place, I would have you to remember that what money was raised even by an appeal to class interest was spent, not in corruption, but in enlightenment. What it did was to bring home to the nation the facts of its own situation. Well these facts, as I have said, were deadly weapons.

Condition of England before Free Trade

Never, I think, was the condition of England so gloomy, not even during the great war against France, as it was at the time when this agitation was taken up by this Chamber of Commerce. Let me give you two or three facts, very elementary facts, or I would rather say let me recall them, because they are probably known to you. There were 20,000 persons in one place whose average earnings were only 11¾d. a week; there were 10,000 in another who were on the verge of starvation. In Manchester 116 mills and other works were standing idle; 681 shops and offices were untenanted; 5,492 dwellings were unoccupied. In one district of Manchester there were 2,000 families without a bed among them, 8,666 persons whose weekly income was only 1s. 2½d. In Stockport 73,314 persons had received relief whose average weekly income was 9½d. Some grim humourist had chalked up on a shutter in that town "Stockport to let." Carlyle sums it up in a sentence, "So many hundred thousands sit in the workhouses, another hundred thousand have not got even workhouses, and in thrifty Scotland itself, in Glasgow, in Edinburgh city, in their dark lanes, hidden from all but the eye of God, and the rare benevolence of the minister of God, there are scenes of woe and destitution and desolation such as one may hope the sun never saw before in the most barbarous regions where men dwelt." That was the condition of the commercial districts when Cobden and his band of brothers began their agitation, and when they fought their fight. Then came at last the Irish Famine, that great object lesson of the corn laws, that curse which was to breed a blessing, and under the shadow of that calamity the victory was won. Well, the little meeting of

seven people in a stable yard in Manchester was to overthrow one of the most powerful Governments and the most powerful interest which could be conceived in England. But what is strange and beautiful in the result is this—that the Minister whom they had overthrown, the Minister whom they had compelled and convinced and vanquished, shares the glory of the victory with them. They were fortunate in that at the head of the Government there was a man like Sir Robert Peel—one of the two Prime Ministers of this century who have been distinguished above all others by a true, tender, transparent political conscience. He was one. I will not name the other. It was fortunate, as I say, for the League that Robert Peel was Prime Minister at that time, and it is certain that the name of Peel will go down united with the name of Cobden and the others as the fathers and benefactors of this great movement.

Ladies and gentlemen, you may well say to me, "All this was long ago, all this is done and achieved for ever; why recall it to us, who know it so well?" I say, on the other hand, you cannot recall it too often, and on an occasion like this we should be almost sinners if we did not commemorate it. Standing in this hall, built on the very site of the massacre of Peterloo, on this historic spot, on this historic occasion, we cannot too well remember what that fight was and from what it saved us. I will tell you one thing, at least, from which it assuredly did save you. It saved you not merely from starvation, but it saved you from revolution. Mr. Bright in 1845 said, and said with truth, "There is no institution in this country—the monarchy, the aristocracy, the Church, or any other whatever—of which I will not say, attach it to the corn laws, and I will predict its fate." And who can doubt that at the time he spoke, with the condition of things that I have described, and with the revolution of 1848, which shook every throne and every constitution in Europe but ours, looming ahead, who can doubt that if the beneficent change of 1846 had not taken place, a revolution would have been the result in this country? That is one supreme result. There is another, also a negative result, which I can describe by a single distortion of a sentence. Lord Melbourne, on a famous occasion in the House of Lords, said that he had heard of many mad things, but, before God, the idea of the repeal

of the corn laws was the maddest he had ever heard of. Well, if you substitute for the word "repeal" the word "re-enactment," you have, I think, one certain result of the agitation of Cobden. Of all the mad things we have heard in our days, the re-enactment of the corn laws is the maddest we can possibly conceive.

Now, it is always well, I think, not to overstate your case. It must be perfectly clear to us all that, in the ecstasy and in the enthusiasm of this great revolution, men hoped from it more than it has been able to accomplish. It has not, for example, produced peace and disarmament. I do not care to measure the extent or the density of the thick war-cloud which broods over Europe. I do not care to compute the number of millions of armed men who stand ranged in battle array, face to face, on the continent of Europe, like bewitched armies, waiting only the evil spirit to rouse them into life and activity—but at any rate we can say this, that if the increase of armies has gone on by gigantic strides since the repeal of the corn laws, that is not due to Free Trade; but, on the other hand, those very military preparations have led those countries far from Free Trade into fiscal errors, as we believe them to be, to the hampering of their trade, the restriction of their commerce, and the imposition of protective duties which we believe to be detrimental to their industry. Again, it is true that the sanguine expectations of the promoters of Free Trade have not been realised, because they have found very few imitators in the world. But Cobden did not demand imitation as a condition of success. He declined to be judged by imitation as a test of his success. He said, "If Free Trade be a good thing for us we will have it. Let others take it if it be a good thing for them; if it be not, let them do without it."

Free Trade and Agriculture

Well, there is another point on which I think some of our friends think that Free Trade has been a failure. I mean with regard to the agriculture of this country. I hear a faint ripple of applause. I do not know if it comes from a distressed or a reassured agriculturist, but I am perfectly certain that this hall will be a building even more exceptional

than I think it is if it does not contain an agriculturist who is full of complaints. For, after all, the first necessary condition of agriculture—and I say it not with a smile, but in grim earnest—is that it always has complained, that it always must complain, and that it always will complain. From the times of Theocritus and Virgil, and even from further back—I suspect, from the time when Adam delved—agriculture had been in a state of complaint. And who can wonder at it? I say in perfect gravity that that is a necessary condition of a trade or calling which is at the mercy of every whim and humour of Nature. There is no conceivable weather which will suit every crop, and so farmers look on all weathers with impartial foreboding. What may secure a harvest may ruin roots; what may swell a swede may drown an oat. Innumerable diseases haunt animals and crops. A poisonous beast may taint the cattle of a nation; a sick potato may starve a race. It is impossible to put any limit to the afflictions which in the ordinary course of Nature, without any interference from art, harass the agriculturist. When he has an abundance, prices fall. When prices rise, there is nothing to sell. You laugh, but it is no laughing matter. I am a landowner and a farmer, and for such it is a long tragedy. And if you put aside even what Nature has done as against the farmer, you have besides what is even more ruinous: the increasing means of communication—the great steamers that cross the ocean and bring to our markets the abundant harvests of Australia, India, America, and Russia. Farmers are now not Scottish or English or Welsh or Irish, they are cosmopolitan. They contend in the markets, not with their neighbours or with those of the adjoining counties, but with distant and virgin regions of the world. Altogether, I confess I think that the complaints of agriculturists are more well founded than complaints of a class usually are. Agriculture suffers under Free Trade, and has always suffered since the Garden of Eden, and will always suffer. But the question is with us to-night: Is agriculture worse off now than it was under the operation of the corn laws? Now, as far as we can judge, farmers are better off than they were before the repeal of the corn laws. They live now at a much higher standard, they pay a much lower rent, their purchasing power is vastly increased by Free Trade. And what was the condition of the farmers of England

before Free Trade? There was a Committee of the House of Commons that sat in 1836 to consider the condition of agriculture in this country. It sent up a report which was an account of almost universal ruin and almost universal insolvency. From such counties as Lincoln, Middlesex, Surrey, Northampton, and Suffolk there came the statement that farmers were paying their rent out of capital. From Buckinghamshire it was positively asserted that a great many of the farmers had failed, and that at least half of the remainder were insolvent. Of the tenantry of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Cambridgeshire, the same, or worse was testified. They were "verging on insolvency—the most desperate state men can be in." And so forth; it is unnecessary to multiply monotonous testimony.

Well, then, the next class that we have to consider are the labourers. Is it not perfectly true that the labourers, though their condition is not what it should be in the agricultural districts even yet, are infinitely better off than they were before 1846 in wages, in purchasing power, and in the dwellings they inhabit? Go into the country districts on a Sunday, and you will see a well-dressed population of labourers and their families that you can scarcely distinguish from the best in the neighbourhood. But what was the condition of things before the repeal of the corn laws? There is in a book that I recommend you to read—if you have leisure to read a work of two volumes on a political subject—Mr. Jephson's *History of the Political Platform*, a most pathetic account, taken from the *Times* newspaper of that date, of a meeting of the agricultural labourers of Wiltshire in January, 1846, four or five months before the repeal of the corn laws was actually achieved. Will you pardon me if I read one or two sentences from it? "The chairman was a labourer; the speakers, with the exception of two, were labourers. The object in view was to call public attention to the present condition of the labouring population in this part of the country, and to petition Her Majesty and the Legislature to take decisive steps for the speedy relief of their extreme distress. The meeting was to have been held in a large booth erected in a field, but the great expense of providing such accommodation was beyond the combined contributions which these poor people could spare from their very scanty means, and therefore they were

compelled to assemble together in the cross-road of the village, and to endure the inclemency of a winter night, while they talked over their common sufferings. The whole of the arrangements and proceedings were strikingly characteristic of the occasion. A hurdle, supported by four stakes driven into the ground beneath a hedge on the roadside, formed a narrow and unsteady platform, capable of supporting only the chairman and one speaker at a time. . . . Four or five candles, some in lanthorns, and others sheltered from the wind by the hands that held them, threw a dim and flickering light upon the groups on this spot, before and around which were gathered nearly 1,000 of the peasantry of Wiltshire. . . . In the shadows of the night the distinctive garb of their class was everywhere discernible, and when the flittering clouds permitted the moon to shine brightly in their faces in them might be seen written, in strong and unmistakable lines, anxiety, supplication, want, hunger. . . One speaker said: 'I don't know much of the corn laws, only that they ha'nt done we labourers much good. It is a long time till July next, before we get new potatoes; and unless something turns up for we poor creatures, starvation stares us in the face on both hands.' Another speaker said: 'There was nothing left for them now but starvation or Free Trade.'" Well, I do not think that that description requires any enlargement, or that anybody who reads it will doubt that the condition of the agricultural labourer was infinitely worse before the repeal of the corn laws than in our time.

Then there are the landlords. I feel like the man in the play, who says, "Ah! thou hast touched me nearly." But I will only make one remark upon the landlords. Their rents have undoubtedly fallen since the means of communication have so greatly improved between foreign countries and ourselves; but I have only one comment to make upon that, and it is this, that the interests of the nation cannot be sacrificed to the interests of a class—and though I feel the deepest sympathy with the sufferings of many landlords whose cases I know, yet I believe they would be the first, in a spirit of patriotism, to deny any claim that the nation should be sacrificed to them. I must also make one further remark: that, so far as we can judge from inquiry, the condition of agriculture in foreign countries, in spite of

bounties and in spite of protective duties, is not much better, and in some cases is certainly worse, than the condition of agriculture in Great Britain under Free Trade.

Commercial Results of Free Trade

But there is one point as to which the results of Free Trade are absolutely unmistakable, and they are the commercial results. May I read to you two sets of figures, which will show this in a moment. In 1846—the year when the corn laws were repealed—the total imports of this country were about £76,000,000 sterling in value. They are believed to have been somewhat overrated, but certainly were not underrated. In 1896, after fifty years' operations of Free Trade, they are £441,802,000, showing an increase of £365,855,000, or 481 per cent. The total exports in 1846 were £74,000,000; in 1896 they were £296,370,000, showing an increase of £222,250,000, or 300 per cent. The exports of British and Irish products in 1846 were £57,786,000, nearly £58,000,000; in 1896 they were over £240,000,000 or £182,000,000 more, showing an increase of 315 per cent.; and the exports of foreign and colonial productions were £16,296,000 in 1846, and £56,233,000 in 1896, showing an increase of about £40,000,000 or 245 per cent. Now any comment on those figures would rob them of their importance and their weight. They are more like a fairy tale than the sort of statistics that they turn out from the Board of Trade; but they are literally and exactly true, and they are largely due to the work which was done by Villiers, Cobden, Bright, and Peel.

But there is one effect of Free Trade which may seem strange and paradoxical to you, but on which I, for my part, lay the very greatest stress. I believe that one of the most important effects of Free Trade has been the maintenance and the consolidation of the British Empire. Now, I fear this may seem strange and paradoxical to those who have been brought up in the belief, which is commonly asserted, that Cobden, and what is called the Manchester School, were hostile or indifferent to the existence of the Empire. But Cobden's own testimony on this point is simple and direct enough. He says, "People tell you I want to abandon our colonies, but I say, 'Do you intend to hold your colonies by the sword, by armies and ships of war?' That is not a permanent hold

upon them. I want to hold them by their affections." I think in that definition you must allow the word affections to include the word interests, because national affections, which are not based on national interests because national, are apt to be sterile plants. But I think that if you allow me that amplification, and allow that national affections shall include for this purpose national interests, you have a true and complete definition of the best foundation of the British Empire. Under that policy, at any rate, the Empire has marched with seven-leagued boots, until in this year of grace we have been privileged to witness a moving panorama of empire, and, what is more, to receive the proposals of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, offering on behalf of Canada commercial facilities to the mother country for the avowed purpose of drawing us closer and closer together.

Free Trade and the Empire

But I will explain in a moment to you why it is that, in my opinion, Free Trade has had so important an effect in maintaining and in consolidating this Empire. In the first place, it has produced the wealth that has enabled us to sustain the burden, and the burden of an Empire like ours must always be great as regards expenditure of energy and of money. Without Free Trade I venture to say that we should have been wholly unable to sustain it. In 1841, when Sir Robert Peel came into power, we were staggering under a much less burden than we bear easily now, and staggering under it with deficits and with despair. We were then in a condition which bordered on revolution, and revolution means the dismemberment of our Empire. I venture, then, to say that both on the ground of maintenance and as having averted revolution, Free Trade has rendered enormous services to our Empire.

But these are not the sole services that Free Trade has rendered us. In my judgment, whatever that may be worth, Free Trade has preserved the Empire. The colonies, indeed, have not travelled very far in our wake with regard to our commercial policy. They know their own business best, and will work out their own salvation on their own lines. But I have an illustrious authority—perhaps the most illustrious outside these islands and inside the Empire—to sustain my view as to the preserving force of Free Trade upon our Empire. Sir Wilfrid Laurier said the other day: "There are parties

who hope to maintain the British Empire upon lines of restricted trade. If the British Empire is to be maintained, it can only be upon the most absolute freedom, political and commercial. In building up this great enterprise, to deviate from the principle of freedom will be to so much weaken the ties and bonds which now hold it together." Well, that is a view that I hold, and that I believe you hold in this hall. I believe that anything in the direction of an Imperial commercial league would weaken this Empire internally, and excite the permanent hostility of the whole world. Now, I begin to feel that in approaching this subject I ought to tread tenderly and delicately, because, though the proposition has been often made, it has been recently made from a political point of view, and therefore I ought perhaps to avoid it altogether. I treat it, however, not with regard to its recent development—which is only its latest—but as regards the doctrine which has been held forth for many years by men of both political parties, that such a league is eminently desirable. I tread delicately near the subject for another reason, because I believe that the idea is dead. I tread near it with the reverence due to a corpse. Now, I respect all serious proposals for binding our Empire more closely together. A great part of my life I have been studying those proposals, and I respect their motive and try to support them, but this particular proposal, I believe, would have a directly contrary effect to that which its promoters claim for it. In the first place, it would be a disturbance of Free Trade. Free Trade need not be considered an idol or a fetish, but it is at all events the system on which our commercial greatness has grown up and developed, and he would be a rash man that would endeavour to lay hands upon it. In the next place, the proposal, if I understand it rightly, would tend to interpose checks upon the free import of the food of the people. I believe that that is absolutely impracticable, but that if it were practicable and were done in the name of the Empire, it would only succeed in making the Empire odious to the working classes of this country. And there is another objection, not less fatal—although it is external and not internal.

Gentlemen, I think it must have occurred to you that such an Empire as ours cannot be built up without exciting great

jealousies. The aggrandisement of nations is something like the aggrandisement of individuals. If you see a person who was very poor suddenly blossom out with a prodigious fortune you are apt to envy him, and further to believe that that fortune may not have been too honestly acquired. I suspect that something of the same sensation comes over foreign nations when they look at the chart of the world and see how largely the British Empire bulks in it. That may be the reason—I know of no other, and certainly of no better—that may be the reason for a fact which you must regard as one of the most salient factors in our foreign policy, in our Imperial policy—and in our relations with foreign nations—I mean the general envy and suspicion with which we are regarded abroad. Nothing is more amazing to the ordinary Briton than to discover the deep-rooted suspicion of our motives, of our policy, and of our action which is entertained towards us in foreign countries; a feeling, no doubt, with which we have sometimes regarded other nations, but which we are completely stupified at discovering with respect to ourselves. You, I daresay, can scarcely understand it; you are conscious, as citizens of a great nation, of high, noble, and even chivalrous aims, and you cannot understand that in pursuing these aims the foreign observer is apt to suspect or think that he detects a trick. Well, I cannot lay too much stress on this point in regard to this subject. I am perfectly certain of this, and I think all your friends who travel will tell you the same, that we lie, for various reasons, under the deep and abiding suspicion of foreign nations. That is a central fact; and under the circumstances I ask you whether, with your extended dominions, and with all your liabilities, it is not well, while you walk strongly, to walk warily upon the path of empire? Well, apply this fact to the proposal to which I have been alluding. Suppose, in the face of this suspicion, that it were proposed to establish an Imperial Customs Union. I believe that to be an impossibility, but supposing it were possible, it would be something which would place all the nations of the world in direct antagonism to it—it is something which, if possible, they would all combine to destroy. We have, of course, a perfect right to do this, but, though all things may be lawful to us within our own borders, all things are not expedient; and I am discussing this now

not as a question of right, but as a question of policy. My belief on this point is confirmed by something that happened this year. You will remember that this year we denounced our commercial treaties with Germany and with Belgium—an innocent step, a simple step, and rendered a necessary step under the happy impulse of Canada. But throughout Europe, in every newspaper, in every country, there was a note of alarm at what we thought was an obvious and ordinary proceeding. They seemed to see an important departure involved; they seemed to see something portentous and menacing. And if that were the case—as it was—with regard to the denouncing of two commercial treaties, I ask you what the feeling of mistrust and suspicion would have been had we established instead an Imperial Customs Union? Remember, gentlemen, that in these later days every savage, every swamp, every desert, is the object of eager annexation or competition; and what in that state of circumstances would have been the feeling created by the development of a new empire—for under these new commercial conditions it would be new—not like the Russian Empire, local, though vast, but a world-wide empire, surrounded by a Customs rampart, a challenge to every nation, a distinct defiance to the world? On the other hand, what is the present state of circumstances? Our Empire is peace, it makes peace, it means peace, it aims at peace. Its extension under Free Trade is for the benefit of all nations. Its motto is the old one of the volunteers:—"Defence, not defiance." A scattered Empire like ours, founded upon commerce and cemented by commerce, an Empire well defended, so as not to invite wanton aggression, can mean and make for nothing but peace. We have on our side, in the long run, all that makes for peace and free commerce in the world. That is a fact that all nations know in their hearts. It is a fact that no wise statesman can hope to disregard. But an empire spread all over the world, with a uniform barrier of a Customs Union presented everywhere, would be, in comparison—I will not say an empire of war, but a perpetual menace, or, at least, a perpetual irritation.

I say, then, that our Empire is peace—that our Empire as at present constituted, under the wise guidance of a Free Trade policy, makes for peace, for commerce, and for

enlightenment. Men in these days want little more than that; they are lucky if they get so much. But that is not all. If you want your foundations to be sounder still, if you wish to dig deeper and broader and stronger the foundations of this world-wide Empire, the home of all English peoples, you want something more even than peace and commerce and enlightenment. You must take care that the corner-stones of that majestic structure are not simply peace, but honour; honour and justice, and fair dealing to all, of whatever colour, who live within our borders. We as a nation have, I think, rarely been so fortunate as to obtain the affection of the subject races over which we rule, but we have at least earned their respect—we have earned their respect for upright government, for scrupulous truth, for straightforward dealing as between governor and governed. If we maintain this high standard of energy and patriotism, I fear nothing for that Empire of which we are privileged to form a part. But we have the example of other empires before us, and if through any lapse on our part, if for any reason whatever it be written in the inscrutable decrees of Fate that we are to follow their example and to crumble and disappear, we can at least resolve this—that we will leave behind us a monument more splendid and more durable than any constructed by the Cæsars and the Pharaohs—the memory of an empire of which the mottoes and the corner-stones were honour, and justice, and peace. These, gentlemen, I venture to think, are the teachings of this hall and of this occasion.

THE END

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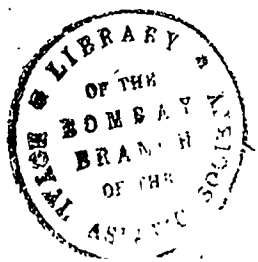

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